

Library of The Theological Seminary

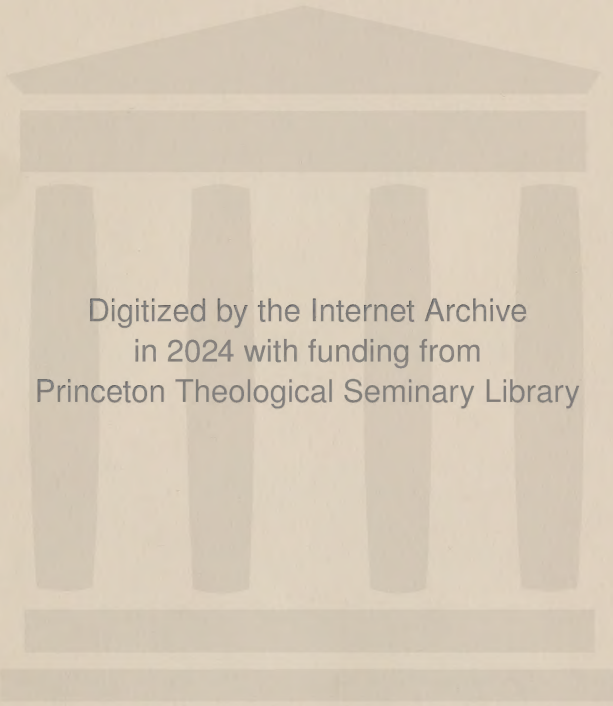
PRINCETON • NEW JERSEY



PRESENTED BY

Levi Stone, Esq.

BT
88
S382
1849



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

AN ESSAY
ON THE
OFFICE OF THE INTELLECT
IN
RELIGION.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

OFFICE OF THE INTELLECT

IN

RELIGION,

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO

THE EVIDENCES OF A REVELATION, AND THE
PROOF OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

BY

WILLIAM EDWARD SCUDAMORE, M.A.

RECTOR OF DITCHINGHAM,

AND FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON:

FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE.

1849.

AN
ESSAY,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

THE reader of the following Essay will not be surprised to find that the sanction of authority is claimed for the principles which it maintains, because it is apparent from the nature of the subject that novelty could only be admitted at the expense of truth. A merited suspicion of grave error, as well as the certain guilt of presumption, would be incurred by one who should set forth new theories, in a matter so near to the vital centre of religion, as its relations to the mind of man. For, if we were able to suppose that no clear judgment on this subject could be obtained from Holy Scripture, so full and distinct as it is allowed to be on every point of practical importance, it would yet appear to us incredible, that eighteen centuries should have elapsed, during which a divine revelation has been known and obeyed by the wisest and

most holy of mankind, without the discovery of those general laws, by which its action on the intellectual and moral frame is governed and determined to its proper end. In the following pages an attempt will be made to establish the truth of this probability upon more positive grounds, by showing, that ignorance of right principle, in this instance as in most others, is to be attributed to a voluntary neglect of means of information, which God has placed within our reach. The ground of this conclusion lies in the facts, which must be proved at length, that whatever is necessary to be known, on this as on all other subjects of eternal interest, has been revealed in the inspired Word of God ; and, farther, that it has also been frequently deduced therefrom, if not as a system, yet in its several parts, by ancient writers of deserved authority. If, in addition, we are able to conclude, that the deductions of those writers obtained a general reception in the best ages of the undivided Church, we seem to possess an amount of evidence that is nothing short of a complete moral demonstration of the truths in question. Since, however, it may appear to those who do not fully realize the unity in doctrine and doctrinal principle which prevailed in early times, with infinite diversity of application and expression, among all who professed adherence to the ancient faith, that, after all, the allegation of Holy Scripture, in those parts where its

meaning is not apparent to all minds, is but an appeal to the private interpretations of uninspired men ; it will also form part of the design now undertaken, to exhibit, as occasion shall serve, the strict harmony and accordance of the principles maintained with the acknowledged facts and necessary laws of human nature.

It must be allowed that investigations of this kind, though presenting considerable difficulties, might with advantage engage the attention of more persons than are found disposed to enter on them. We all acknowledge that it is our duty to maintain, as we best may, that portion of the truth with which, through God's providence, we are in trust ; and we should be ashamed to express a doubt of the ultimate reward of our exertions in its cause, if they failed to meet with the encouragement of present and visible success. Notwithstanding, it is too true, that while no amount of labour is thought ill-bestowed on the less necessary details of learning in all its departments, the men of this generation are impatient of the study of those eternal principles, in harmony with which alone consist the truth and power of growth of all real human knowledge. Even the teachers of the age, who, from their natural gifts and providential advantages, are capable of nobler work than the accumulation and arrangement of outward facts, are generally found to shrink from the full responsi-

bility of their exalted office, or perhaps from the vulgar odium that always attends the guardianship of that which may not be disputed. Thus loose in their attachment to fixed principle, too many are allured by the ambitious novelties of speculative disquisition, and learn soon to be contented, if they do not find themselves in front-to-front conflict with truths that have endured the assay of ages, or been stamped by the attestation of the Word of God. In the meanwhile, parties are multiplied and enjoy credit for a day; for originality is always more or less popular, because, even when it does not remove old restraints, being destitute of authority, it cannot offer to impose new on the unwilling. There have been some, however, who appeared to begin well, who were not ashamed of the truth because it was old, nor despised it because they had learned and not discovered it; and yet, in the hour of trial, proved themselves to be but feebly influenced by those enduring principles which they honoured with a lip-service, and too easily moved by that spirit of change, "the spirit of the world," to which their words were a defiance. If no examples of this inconstancy had been furnished by our own age and country, it is not too much to say, with reference to our especial subject, that we should ere this have witnessed the revision—in some cases, it may be, the general rejection—of many specious, but false, theories in the philosophy

of faith, which still retain an undisputed place in the acceptance of the multitude.

It is a subject of daily complaint, that modern endeavours to convert the unbeliever, or to induce the professed Christian to walk worthy of his vocation, are not blessed with that measure of success which the importance of a right faith and practice, and the experience of former ages, might naturally lead us to anticipate. It was in the attempt to ascertain the cause of this failure, that the writer found himself carried through that extended course of reasoning and reflection to which he desires now to invite the attention of others. He is satisfied that he has ample ground for the conclusion, that the evil to which he refers has, in a great measure, arisen from the very general error of allowing an exclusive or disproportionate influence in the determination and apprehension of the objects of religious faith to one or more faculty or function of the mind, while other elements of our complex being are denied their just exercise and operation. That some evil consequences must ensue from such a course is at once obvious; and it is not unreasonable to believe, that their seriousness will be in proportion to the importance of the subject concerned, and the dignity of those faculties which suffer, whether from undue excitement, from misdirection, or disuse. It is hoped, therefore, that the wide prevalence of tendencies in this direction,

will justify the attempt, however humble in design, and imperfect in execution, to call attention to that theory of conversion and belief, which, being evidently set forth in Holy Scripture, is itself entitled to be regarded as an integrant part of the divine revelation.

It is true that the erroneous principle, on which our faulty practice has been built, is now seldom maintained in express terms among ourselves: yet it may be feared that it is not less influential in fact, than when it was enforced by the direct teaching of many eminent and able authors. The national mind has been formed by lessons, some of which have been forgotten, though their effect remains. The result of this has been, the prevalence among us of modes of thought and feeling which may be traced to sources that many of those who entertain them are often found most anxious to repudiate. We have passed through a period of cold love, and, therefore, of reluctant faith; and evidences of its debasing influence are still to be seen on every side. The evil may have developed itself in other forms than those by which our fathers were misled; and these, perhaps, less obviously noxious; but since, at the same time, we are assailed at more points and with a more ensnaring guile, the amount of mischief that ensues is not diminished. This is an age of subtle self-deception. Men act unconsciously on principles which they

condemn, and imagine themselves to hate; but the danger is only enhanced when the disease lurks unsuspected in the veins.

It will be observed that the remarks which follow principally have respect to one well-defined and obvious phase of error, and it may at first sight appear that this arrangement is calculated to give a more limited and partial view of the whole question than from its importance it demands. This method of selection, however, will probably be found to possess indirectly every advantage that we could expect to obtain from any other course; for an inquiry into a leading misconception and its results, if carefully conducted, is apt to carry us, by inference or suggestion, to the detection of other fallacies in which the same false principle is differently developed. In some cases, a still further benefit may be expected to result; for the complete dissection of one error, or class of errors, enables us to form a probable judgment of opinions and practices, which, though they do not involve the same principle, are found to bear resemblance to those which the investigation has shown to be unsound.

I. The particular error which is proposed for consideration, may exist and be influential either as an opinion, an impression, or an unconscious principle of action. It may be broadly defined in the brief statement that the faith of a Christian ought, in the first place, and chiefly, to be erected

on an argumentative basis. Sometimes, it is plausibly expressed (though inaccurately in respect of language), by saying that it is a duty in reasonable creatures to believe only upon grounds of reasonable conviction. No exception could be taken to this proposition, if by the word "reason" were understood all those faculties of soul which distinguish man from the inferior members of the animal creation; but, in that case, it might be said, that not only is it a duty to require that the reason should be satisfied, but that the due exercise of this gift is the only possible condition of a proper faith. The assertion, however, becomes untrue and dangerous, when, as is usually the case, the word is employed in a less proper, or in a partial and contracted sense. It is untrue, if by the word "reason" we mean the understanding; much more so, if only one portion of it, as the logical faculty, which, even if allowed to be an exclusive property of man, is but one, and that far from the highest, of his distinctive attributes. The purely mental process by which we are enabled to discover a new property of geometrical forms, or to infer the existence of some law of material nature, hitherto unknown, is not competent to deal in the same manner with the objects of the spiritual world, and to deduce their several qualities and relations from ascertained phenomena. Every mechanical art has its own instrument; each department of literature or science demands the

exercise of a peculiar ability in those who would cultivate it with success: we are therefore only pursuing the analogy into “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” if we insist on the necessity of a distinct and appropriate qualification in those who would dedicate themselves to the most difficult and mysterious of all pursuits,—the knowledge of God and of their own souls, and of their state after death.

Very different, however, was the judgment of many eminent persons of the last century, the main object of whose teaching was, in their own words, to establish the conformity of revealed religion with the natural reason of mankind. The spirit of their theology and its effects are at present known generally only through the works of those who undertook the direct defence of Christianity against the objections of the infidel; and thus it has happened, that most of the favour or dislike with which different parties are disposed to regard the religious peculiarities of that period, has fallen in a quarter where less was probably deserved. The writer upon the Evidences only represented the temper and transmitted the opinions of his predecessors and contemporaries; as might be shown abundantly from the religious literature of the period. The general approbation with which the apologetic works best known to us were received, is also a sufficient proof that they found readers of con-

genial mind. They did not create that cold and speculative disposition to which their authors thought it right to make their appeal; and it would be unjust to expect from men of no extraordinary character a course widely deviating from the sentiments and habits of the age in which they received their intellectual and moral training. They thought as those about them thought, and spoke as they heard others speak; and if we are now able to see that, in contending for the faith, they encouraged by their example an erroneous estimate of the unaided powers of man, and thus undesignedly prolonged the reign of error; we must be moderate in our censure, lest, in condemning them, we should condemn ourselves, who doubtless in our turn are no less influenced by the prevailing spirit of the age in which we live. Meanwhile our admiration of the good that was in the writers themselves, and our thankful acknowledgment of whatever service they have rendered, need not preclude the expression of a fear lest the continued study of their works, produced in unhappy times, should now, where uncorrected by aught of a more deep and earnest character, tend to delay the full attainment of that very object which they had most at heart. At least it cannot be denied, that it may be in some measure attributed to them, that inducements to believe in Christ, which, in point of fact, are found to exercise but a slight influence on practical and earnest men,

are still too generally treated by our religious teachers, as of chief value and importance; and that other considerations of more real power as motives to belief have been overshadowed, and are, too often, quite forgotten. Nor can they be discharged from all responsibility for the unhappy indirect result of their erroneous method, which, it may be feared, has in no small degree contributed to produce that great practical error of the present day, the effect of which has been to depose the conscience from its legitimate supremacy, and make it give way to the encroachments of the unsanctified understanding, beneath whose unsalutary influence those evils are still gaining strength against which its treacherous alliance was needlessly and faithlessly invoked. At all events, the religious writers of the last century, and, in particular, the professed opponents of infidelity, failed in their endeavours to bring the people of this land to a more real subjection to the Gospel of Christ. Whether we deem, with some, that our present state of religion and morals is a necessary evil, for which no preventive could have availed; or think, with others, that they might have succeeded better, if the weapons of their warfare had been always chosen from the armoury of God; we cannot dispute the fact, we cannot doubt what the witness of every day proclaims, that the open profanity which they encountered has only been fused into a more subtle and

more widely blighting scepticism, which pervades all classes of society, and has infected more or less the public sense of every moral and religious obligation.

II. It is not difficult to ascertain the circumstances to which the ordinary mode of treating the evidences of Christianity is indebted for the pre-eminence in esteem which it enjoys. The age in which it was matured was at once intellectual and self-sufficient. The cultivated mind was in union with the unchastened heart; and the unvarying result ensued,—a presumptuous reliance on the mere intellect, supported by an exaggerated formal view of its capacity and office. The pride of mind and education was flattered when the advocate of religion was heard to speak the language of the world, and pay such marked homage to the mere earthly gifts of talent and accomplishment. At the same time the general silence as to any moral preparation appeared to justify the forgetfulness, so widely prevalent, of the necessity of self-discipline and holy living.

It must be allowed that the temptation to such a compromise is both strong and subtle. The world assumes its right to judge on equal terms, and the Christian is unable to dispute the assumption without incurring the necessity of defending much more than is involved in the mere subject of debate. Good men are at all times unwilling to give offence,

and, in this case, a delusive charity might restrain them from language which implied a moral disqualification in their opponents. Nor do we lightly incur the charge of bigotry,—an imputation always prompt and serviceable against the maintainers of fixed principle, and, when they stand alone, most painfully invidious. Besides, the attempt to exclude others from an assumed common ground, involves a real responsibility with which the better men are always the less willing to be burdened, until the call of duty is distinctly heard. It required a high sense of Christian honour and a burning love of truth to inspire the defender of his faith with strength to overcome these obstacles, and assert his rightful position as the appointed guardian of a sacred trust.

Moreover, the world has always been active in its own cause. One result of the manner in which the political relations of the Church had been employed to her disadvantage was, that among those who shared her authority were many who were unfaithful expositors of her doctrine, and many more who very inadequately represented her faith and spirit. She was thus made to speak a language foreign to her mind; while the secularity of her tone detracted further from the credit of those truths of which she certainly appeared as the chief witness.

From the operation of these and the like causes,

those writers were but few in number and of no great authority, who ventured to think that rebuke and entreaty are sometimes as appropriate as argument in dealing with the perverse and immoral sceptic, and dared to speak for Christianity as becomes a Christian, assured of the truth himself, and authorized, as well as anxious, to strengthen and extend its influence. It seemed left almost entirely to the written Word of God to proclaim still to the forgetful world, that the "pure in heart," and none other, shall "see Him," and that the only road to the knowledge of His doctrine lies through obedience to His will¹.

III. Among the evils which have attended this facility of concession to human pride and wilfulness, should be mentioned its direct tendency to substitute for the "faith once delivered to the saints" a limited and arbitrary creed, which might adapt itself to the unyielding prejudices of the individual. Witness the deliberate care with which Soame Jenyns, a writer formerly much read and in esteem, endeavours to relieve his argument from the presumption of any *necessary* connexion between the veracity of Holy Scripture and the truth of the revelation for which he is contending². Lardner,

¹ Matt. v. 8; John vii. 17; 1 John ii. 3, &c.

² "Let us suppose that the accounts of Christ's temptation, the devil's taking refuge in the herd of swine, with several other narrations in the New Testament, frequently ridiculed by un-

to whom so many modern authors on the Evidences have been indebted for their materials, became a Socinian himself; in other words, he carried the supremacy of the intellect, with still greater boldness, into the very heart and substance of revealed truth³. One is loath to mention the name of the very able Paley with an expression of blame, especially when the increased earnestness of his later years is remembered; and yet, in equal justice, it must be confessed that his writings, and even actions, afford strong indications of that spirit of compromise which permits the rejection of one or more truths of the Gospel in order to secure an unsound adherence to the rest. To be able to see this it is only necessary to call to mind the advice that he gave to an Arian, who consulted him on the lawfulness of seeking holy orders⁴. In strong

believers, were all but stories, accommodated to the ignorance of the times, pious frauds, &c., will this in the least impeach the excellence of Christ's religion, or the authority of its founder? or is Christianity to be answerable for all the fables of which it may have been the innocent occasion? The want of this obvious distinction has much injured the Christian cause," &c.—Works, vol. iv. p. 80.

³ Life, by Kippis, prefixed to his Works, p. lviii. He prided himself expressly on having found his way to that heresy without being indebted to any of its earlier partisans.

⁴ He only "entered, in his reply, into a further explanation of what he had advanced in the chapter on Subscription." (Mor. and Pol. Phil., B. iii. pt. i. c. 22.) Meadley's Life,

contrast with such faint-hearted surrender, or presumptuous denial of the truth, is the unwavering fidelity of its early champions. As an example to the purpose, we may take the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which seems, as we may collect from Scripture itself, to have presented peculiar difficulties to the heathen mind. Notwithstanding the general aversion of unbelievers to this article of faith, the primitive Christians did not feel themselves at liberty to deny it, to evade the assertion of it, or to explain it away; on the contrary, they maintained it openly and broadly, and were content to leave the result in the hands of Him who had revealed it. Among the remains of the second century alone are three treatises upon this subject, intended for

p. 96. One case which he considers (and it was that of his correspondent) is of a person who finds "certain particular propositions in the Articles which he disbelieves, although he assents to the main part of them," &c. "As to this case," he says, "I find no reason, upon much reconsideration, to question the principle I have laid down."—Works, vol. xi. p. 133. To allude to a single other point; the same turn of mind is shown in the following sentence, adopted from Burnet; the effect of which, on a young mind, has more than once come under the notice of the present writer: "When divine writers argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that their reasonings end in, as parts of divine revelation; but we are not bound to be able to make out, *or even to assent to*, all the premises made use of by them, in their whole extent, unless it appear plainly that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them."—Evid. pt. iii. c. 2.

unbelievers, and it enters freely into some other apologetic writings of the same date ⁵.

Another indication of unsoundness in theory is observable in most of those who profess to rest their belief on what they term a rational conviction. They show a continual tendency to narrow the ground on which they stand. They affect simplicity, and are dissatisfied unless they have a proof every part of which may be present to the mind at once ; some simple, easy form of argument to which they may have recourse immediately, should doubts assail them. When they conceive that they have obtained this, they feel no inducement to proceed further ; and thus, by an indirect effect of their principle, they are led to submit to a restriction which it does not avowedly impose, so that their faith rests upon a basis still more narrow and insecure than is made necessary by their addiction to a purely logical proof. Hence it is that the evidences of Christianity are so frequently limited in idea to that well-known scheme of argument which asserts the divine mission of the Gospel from the acknowledged facts of its first rise and origin.

An obvious effect of this further error has been to weaken the hold of truth on the mind of

⁵ Just. M. Athenag. Tertull. de Resurr. Carn. Theoph. ad Autolyc. l. i. c. 13. Orig. c. Cels. l. 7, p. 352, &c. ed. Spenc. Of works not addressed to the heathen, see Iren. l. v. &c. Orig. de Princ. l. ii. c. 10.

believers, who are without sufficient root in themselves, and thus leave them exposed to dangers from which a wiser discipline of faith would have secured them. When a person, whose faith still requires the support of outward evidence, knows but one answer to every doubt that may arise, he may almost be said to hold his religion at the caprice of accident. A variation of the powers of mind, or a mere change of feeling, irrational and unaccountable, by loosening that one bond of attachment to the truth, might suddenly cast him adrift, to wander without hope or aim upon a sea of doubt and darkness; wearied with whose perpetual tossings he would at length be fain to seek a quiet harbour in an unreasoning apathy, or in deliberate unbelief. A single other stay might perhaps suffice, until the mind regained its strength and clearness; but when man has lost all faith, he has lost the means and hope of his recovery.

IV. If we refer the question now before us to the decision of those ages that were in close proximity to the announcement of the Gospel, we are met by a doctrine and a language which are strikingly at variance with modern popular opinion and its ordinary expression. We find that, when the unbeliever insisted on the conditions so peremptorily exacted and freely conceded among ourselves,—of being taught to understand ere required to believe,—his demand was thrust aside by the invari-

able answer, "Believe, that you may understand." The principle is often enunciated in this its broadest and most uncompromising form⁶. At other times, when it is developed and applied with less abruptness and more circumstance, the play of reason and illustration may occasionally leave the impression, that it is mitigated in strictness and severity. But it is not so in truth. The early Christians, of all men, did not lose their hold of a principle in speaking of it. They meant fully what they said, and meant it always. This principle, then, expressed or understood, is the foundation of all their arguments, advice, or exhortation. It pervades the whole compass of the primitive theology, and gives to every part its practical significance and force. Among the writings of S. Augustine is a treatise "On the Advantage of Believing," in which the judgment and practice of the Church in this respect are thoughtfully enforced and contrasted with the licence of the Manichees. The object of the writer, expressed in his own words, is to maintain that, "a person cannot take the first step in religion aright, unless he previously believe things, the understanding of which will be granted afterwards, when, through good conduct, he is worthy of it; nor by any means at all, unless he be impelled by

⁶ Especially by the very practical Augustine. See Sermon XLIII. in Isa. vii. 9.; Sermon XXII. in Ps. cxix., &c.

the strong controlling influence of authority⁷." The very form of most of the primitive writings, directed to the conversion of the unbeliever, is a strong testimony to the prevalence and power of such views and feelings as the principle in question would produce. They are for the most part orations, exhortations, and friendly epistles, and sometimes partake largely of the nature of a moral discourse. Again, because the moral nature, which is common to all, was recognised as the basis of faith, the Jew was addressed in the same spirit as the Gentile; and that at a time when little hope was entertained of any good result, and the chief motive which the Christian had in speaking was the duty that he owed to truth⁸. It is also a significant fact, that the early apologist, whose arguments bear the greatest resemblance to those for which our own writers evince so strong a preference, composed his work before he was admitted to the order of Catechumens,—as a test, it would seem, required by the Church of his sincerity⁹. He was still able to survey Christianity from without. Modern writers have, as it were, attempted to throw themselves

⁷ De Util. Cred. c. 21.

⁸ Observe the remarkable manner in which rebuke and warning and entreaty are mingled with reasoning from the prophecies in S. Augustine's Treatise against the Jews, cap. i. vii., &c.

⁹ Arnobius. See Woodham's Introduction to Tertullian's Apology. Ch. iii. p. xlvii.

into a similar position, and the result has been the same logical method of defence and argument.

V. The remarks which have been made must not be supposed indicative of a wish to undervalue the legitimate exercise of the intellect upon the evidences of religion. They are merely the expression of a strong persuasion that the truths of revelation cannot be expected to gain a permanent acceptance, or exercise a real influence upon the life and conversation, when they are presented to the disciple solely, or even chiefly, as a subject of the understanding, and, in particular, as mere logical conclusions, whatever may be the premises from which they are deduced. It is, in a few words, the desire of the writer to maintain, that demonstration does not necessitate conviction, and that intellectual perception is not identical with saving faith; that “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation¹.”

The adoption of a false principle in connexion with this subject is the more to be deplored for the very reason that we cannot dispense with laboured argument upon the evidences of religion. “A reason of the hope that is in us,” even in this partial sense, is essential to the education of the well-instructed Christian. It is especially needful for

¹ Rom. x. 10.

those whose office obliges them above others to labour for the conversion of the infidel, or to watch over the faith of their brethren. But, on the other hand, necessity does not impose, and therefore does not justify, the bare and exclusive, or the excessive use, of methods of conviction which, when thus used alone, or in excess, or uncorrected by an accessory discipline of mind and heart, tend to perpetuate unchristian modes of thought, and a false theory of religious faith; and which, at the same time, betray their own unsoundness by surrendering the most sacred truths to an irreverent license of dispute and scrutiny. While, therefore, we admit the use, or, if need be, defend the necessity of works upon the evidences of Christianity, which shall be partly at least of an argumentative character, we must leave ourselves at liberty to protest against every thing that is manifestly unscriptural in the tone or language, and dangerous in the method, of those who are popularly understood to have supplied the want. Indeed, the necessity and general employment of such an instrument of education, or conviction, ought to stimulate our vigilance against any accidental error in its use or application.

VI. A brief reference to the various classes whom the advocate of truth is called upon to address, will serve to explain the intention with which these observations have been made.

(1.) It is probable that among ourselves, the most

frequent instance of recourse to modern defences of religion for a practical purpose of immediate urgency is to be found in the case of sincere believers who are assailed and shaken by a temporary doubt. Such persons have a moral strength which enables them to profit by the argument when it is judiciously enforced; but there is reason to fear that, in seeking a solution of their doubts, they are too often disheartened and repelled by the uncongenial tone and spirit of their instructor. More visible earnestness, more sympathy and tenderness, than they are wont to meet with, are surely no less needed than deserved by them. The doubting mind should be referred to obedience as the great source of knowledge and assurance, and meanwhile restrained by warnings, kind, but solemn, as from a friend and one who knows the value of a soul and has authority to labour for its rescue: not crossed with bare cold reasoning such as might proceed from one who is at heart indifferent to its welfare.

(2.) The same causes which have partially thwarted the endeavour to remove the difficulties of a disturbed faith, are found to lead to more serious evils, when they are brought to act upon men of lax principle and conduct, though not professing any doubt of the truth of revelation. It must involve a dangerous temptation for such persons to see the Gospel defended by a mode of rea-

soning which appears to allow, (as some writers appear distinctly to allow,) that it may be rejected without sin after what the inquirer shall deem a competent examination of its evidence. The concession suggests at once either its possible falsehood, or its comparative unimportance if true. Thus indifference is justified, or still worse, the latent scepticism of the immoral mind is matured into conscious and actual hostility. But the worst effect is produced in men of a naturally earnest and religious temper, whose perceptions have nevertheless been blunted by a course of sin. To them truth is at once more necessary and more real than to others: they desire an unbending law and a faith that can hold them in subjection; and readily and truly would they answer to the call, if the trumpet gave a less uncertain sound. On the other hand, they are disappointed and oppressed by the spectacle of a religion which, though claiming to direct every thought, and control every feeling, is studiously divested by its advocates of all that is calculated to overawe the understanding, to excite the sympathies of an affectionate heart, or to satisfy the requirements of a devout imagination².

² Bishop Horsley has thus strongly expressed himself upon this subject:—"It is much to be lamented that this evidence (namely, that of which a "brief summary" is given in 1 John v. 6) has been totally overlooked by those who with much ostentation of philological learning which they possessed, and of metaphysical which they possessed not, have composed

(3.) If it be conceded that there is any truth, or even probability, in these remarks, they surely furnish a strong ground of caution in the selection and use of works upon the Evidences as an instrument of education. It must be allowed that the moral and spiritual attainments of the young are as various as their intellectual; and, therefore, supposing our principle to be true, that method which, from the active presence of corrective qualities, may inform and strengthen faith in one, may tend to its destruction in another. The experience of any teacher of theology, possessing even in a slight degree the confidence of his pupils, will bear me out in asserting that the danger here suggested does not exist in theory alone.

(4.) Our ordinary treatment of the open unbeliever is not more prudent, or more successful in its general result. Consider, first, the very unusual case of an unbeliever in a Christian land, who has devoted himself in all sincerity and earnestness to the discovery of the truth. We must suppose in him a pure life and reverent mind; for these form the only basis of sincerity. Thus armed and prepared, he is not far from the object of his search, however thick the veil which now obscures his spiritual vision. If he is left to himself, he will in-

laboured *demonstrations* (as they presume to call them) of natural and revealed religion,—demonstrations which have made, I fear, more infidels than converts.”—Serm. VIII.

stinctively avoid approaching the subject of religion, as he would engage in some merely philosophical or historical inquiry. It is probable, however, that this will be the very form in which the evidences of Christianity are obtruded on him ; and, if so, there will be great danger lest his habitual reverence be injured, and his incipient faith discouraged, by the means thus injudiciously employed to sustain and guide them.

(5.) A still greater failure has been found to follow the attempt, as too often conducted, to demonstrate the divine origin of our religion to infidels who are destitute of those moral qualities which predispose the heart to its reception³. And here also a much

³ A remarkable example occurs in an attempt to convert Lord Byron when at the height of his evil renown, and in the full career of profligacy, of which an account is given by the person who made it, in a work published in London in 1830. The writer had stipulated, that he should be allowed to lecture without interruption for *twelve hours*, but soon found that "his Lordship's patience was at an end, that he wished to be a speaker, and no longer a hearer," p. 46. A debate ensued, in which the following questions were handled. Did the Apostles write in good Greek? Was it the devil who tempted Eve? Had the Jews a distinct idea of a future state? How is the existence of evil to be explained without denying the goodness of God? Why should any people be still allowed to remain without a knowledge of the Gospel, if it be necessary for their welfare? What will become of the heathen at the last day? Did not our Lord and the Apostles express themselves as if the last day were close at hand? Has there been less misery in the world since the introduction of Christianity than before? Is there not much

worse evil is to be deplored than the mere inadequacy of the means employed. A considerate person will see more cause to wonder at the conduct, than at the ill success, of those thoughtless reasoners who invite, or appear to invite, the unchastened and impure mind to the contemplation of a mystery into the depth of which the eye of an archangel cannot penetrate. Gratuitously proclaiming themselves defenders of the faith, they seem, notwithstanding, to betray a secret indifference to it, when they so rudely expose the professed object of their best

erotic feeling in female devotion? &c. The result of the conference was, that the unhappy infidel became "the theme of general admiration on account of his acuteness, extensive reading, and great knowledge of the Scriptures," (p. 68,) and, we may add, elated with the victory, justly or not attributed to him, and hardened in unbelief. Subsequent conversations are recorded with Byron and others in which similar questions were discussed with similar success. The title-page intimates that they were held "a short time previous to his Lordship's death." See also Moore's *Life*, vol. ii. p. 683. It was well remarked in a cotemporary review of this latter work, that "instead of suffering the scoffer to dwell upon collateral and comparatively unimportant questions, the person who strove to convince him should have pressed him home with this text: 'He that is willing to do the will of my Father, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' Instead of this, he suffered the controversy to run to waste upon points of subordinate moment, . . . matters in which a disputant would be glad to take refuge from the pursuit and urgency of those plain duties, the observance of which is, humanly speaking, absolutely necessary to the success of all our inquiries into deeper matters."—*Brit. Crit.* April, 1831.

hopes and noblest affections to be discussed without reverence by the apostate and alien, who seldom gives them even the shadow of an excuse by affecting a greater interest than he feels. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," is the motto which should have been inscribed by the apologist on every chapter of his Evidences; but he has been content to ask for an impartial consideration of his argument, and a dispassionate decision on its merits,—conditions of belief of which the irreligious and immoral are not capable. Thus a false test of truth is brought into use, and unbelief and heresy are palliated as errors of the judgment; one function of retributive justice is obscured, and the attention effectually withdrawn from the real seat of the disease in the corrupt affections of the unbelieving heart.

(6.) Again, to advert to modern efforts to evangelize the heathen. There can be no doubt that some portion of our comparative failure in that quarter is due to the same error which has operated so disadvantageously at home. It is well known how little exertion has been used to bring the philosophizing Brahman, or the more civilized of the Mahometans, within the fold of Christ. They can oppose argument with argument, and the Missionary has not been taught that there are but few cases which really warrant a contest with such weapons. At the commencement of his labours he probably

experiences a defeat, the risk of which should not have been encountered, and thenceforward, disheartened by a feeling of incompetence, is led to devote himself entirely to the conversion of the poor and ignorant; and thus the cause of Christ is needlessly deprived of one of the most effectual supports it can receive,—the example and authority of men of station, power, and learning⁴.

In those instances which occur of success with

⁴ In some parts this system proceeds almost to the entire neglect of the adults. A writer in the "Colonial Church Chronicle," who shows great knowledge of India, complains of "two notions almost universally received" there: "1st, that you must *intellectualize* the people before you can *evangelize* them. 2ndly, that the case of the adult heathen is next to hopeless, if not quite so; and that, therefore, one's only, or one's main chance, is with the children." He proceeds to speak of the Missionary School of Dr. Duff, now in connexion with the Free Kirk, in which "lads are instructed, one may almost say *de omni scibili*, from the elements of English to the highest branches of mathematical and physical science, and also (alas!) in the deepest mysteries of our most holy faith, before they have been brought to believe its simplest postulates." Who will not share the "sorrow and horror" of this writer, when he read "the answers to examination papers and the essays on such subjects, which have from time to time been published, as, *avowedly*, the productions of *unbelieving* pupils of the institution?" The effect of the system has been to make Deists, not Christians. "This most energetically conducted and (*intellectually*) most successful institution, having had for years a *daily* attendance of *hundreds of pupils*, has produced but twenty or twenty-four converts." The same grievous error (with many others) seems to be committed in nearly all the Missionary schools in India.—Vol. ii. pp. 28. 86.

educated heathens, it is to be feared that the spirit of self-reliance which was permitted, and even designedly exercised, in their conversion, has been too often displayed in their subsequent career, and that they have seldom exhibited that unfeigned and consistent humility of soul in the submission of the understanding to the mysteries and laws of religion which the Gospel imperatively demands of every son of man. We have trusted to the effect of reasoning, and have forgotten the inherent power of truth. We have found men conscious of an evil, and seeking restlessly for some relief, and we have mocked them with an intellectual problem, that the very infirmities for which a remedy was needed, disabled them from solving aright; and when, here and there, some vigorous mind, directed by a happy prejudice, has forestalled the true conclusion, only a compromise at the most has been effected between the pride of intellect and the authority of religion. The Gospel is felt to have conceded as well as exacted something. It has forsaken its exalted ground, and disparaged its own right to command, by gratuitously becoming what, beyond a very narrow limit, it was not meant to be,—a subject of opinion, of adjustment, and debate. Thus, though belief in the Gospel be professed, a virtual scepticism remains too often dominant, and we have little cause to wonder if ere long the new convert has learnt again to suspect a religion which has

made itself known to him more as an intellectual exercise than as a law to intellect ⁵.

VII. In some succeeding chapters, an attempt will be made to show more fully the reality and magnitude of the evils that have been here pointed out, in the hope of preparing the way for the formation of a correct and scriptural view of the office and the duties of the Christian advocate. The following meanwhile may be regarded as a brief sketch of the ideas proposed to be developed.

According to our principles, the advocate of divine truth must not suppose that he has done all that is required of him, when he has constructed a proof that does not admit of formal refutation. He must bear in mind continually that in the present state of human nature, all practical perfection lies in the equipoise of conflicting tendencies, that

⁵ An instance of contrast between failure like our own and the success of a wiser method, which, from its striking character and vivid colouring, appears as much an emblem as an example of the principle in action, has been recorded, we may think providentially, in the most important chapter of post-apostolic history. I allude to the conversion of the philosopher and logician who, after foiling the most able reasoners at Nice, was subdued by the holy simplicity of an unlettered man reciting a brief summary of the Christian faith: "*Et philosophus conversus ad discipulos suos, vel ad eos qui audiendi gratiâ convenerant: Audite, inquit, O eruditi viri, Donec verbis mecum gesta res est, verba verbis opposui, et quæ dicebantur, dicendi arte subverti: ubi vero pro verbis virtus processit ex ore dicentis, non potuerunt resistere verba virtuti, nec homo adversari potuit Deo.*"—Ruffin. Hist. Eccles., lib. i. c. 3.

compensate each other's deficiency, excess, or misdirection; and if he has occasion to address himself to the intellectual nature of his fellows, he must provide against the peculiar dangers of such a course by moving the moral and imaginative faculties to a proportionate activity. He must be careful that his own motives are simply zeal for God, and love towards man, untainted by any ambition to control the faith of others, or to obtain victory in argument. He must be earnest himself, and let his earnestness be seen and felt. He must show reverence for his theme, and at the same time demand it from his hearers. A well-studied view of the true nature and position of the being for whom the Gospel is designed, will be his best guide in the selection of those general means by which he will endeavour to promote its influence and reception; while, in the treatment of individuals, he will be careful to trace the evil he would combat—whether unbelief or doubt—to its true, though perhaps hidden source—a sinful life, infirmity of character, or unsuspected ignorance. The nature of man, therefore; as at first constituted; as corrupt through sin; and, again, as renewed by Christ; will form another branch of our inquiry; after those errors and defects of principle and method, to which reference has been already made, have been more fully considered.

And here, before proceeding to the next part of

our subject, it may be useful to remind the reader, that, as we are dealing with general principles, our conclusions will always admit of a wider application than is usually expressed. A person who professes a general belief in Christianity will be actuated in his denial or reception of any of its doctrines, which may have been called in question, by the same class of moral motives, as those which, under other circumstances, lead to the rejection or acceptance of the Gospel as a whole. Thus, for example : As far as moral causes exert an influence on the conclusions of the intellect, the result will be the same, whether the discussion raised be of the divine mission of Christ or of His divine nature. It will be remembered, then, that, although our language throughout this Essay may have especial reference to actual unbelief, our principles are equally applicable to the position of the heretic and the latitudinarian ; and that they ought, therefore, to have the same weight in defining our conduct towards them, as in regulating our endeavours to promote the conversion of the infidel.

The practical inference will therefore be, that, whatever the form of error to be opposed, whatever the amount of ignorance to be instructed, the efforts of those who have “done the work of evangelists,” whether at home or abroad, would have deserved, and in all human probability been attended by, a larger measure of success, if their teaching had

been marked, on the one hand, by a more practical recognition of the inherent pollution of original sin, and of the enfeebling and debasing effects of actual transgression ; and, on the other, by a greater reliance on the enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost, “the Spirit of truth,” the only teacher of the soul, and the guide into all truth.

CHAPTER II.

By the Evidences of the Christian religion, is generally understood an argumentative appeal to certain facts connected with its introduction into the world, or having reference to its doctrinal and practical system. Among these are—its previous announcement in ancient prophecy; certain events in its early history, as recorded by various and independent, and sometimes uninterested, writers; the undeniable fulfilment of expectations which it raised; the beauty and coherence of its theology; the excellence of its morality; and its adaptation to the wants of human nature. In the conduct of this argument it is assumed that those to whom it is addressed have it in their power to ascertain and estimate the truth and relevancy of the particular propositions which may be chosen for its basis.

Now it has been said, in the preceding chapter, that this mode of recommending the Gospel to the understanding of mankind, however useful in its proper place, is insufficient and delusive, nay, even dangerous, when used exclusively, or without a

due regard to the moral fitness of the individual, and a cautious reverence for the subject. An opinion has also been expressed to the effect that, a just view of human nature, considered both in itself and in its relations to the great Author of revealed religion, would suggest the employment of a more comprehensive range of influences; in which should be included every suitable *incitement* to belief, as well as every formal argument in favour of its object. The following reflections, which are principally of an abstract character, appear at once to sustain the objections that have been urged, and also to furnish indications of a better principle, the full development of which will be attempted in some future chapters.

I. The first observation to be made is suggested by the language of those who have been our usual guides in what they have termed a "sober investigation and rational inquiry into the truth of revealed religion¹." As we listen to their profession of a scrupulous adherence to pure reasoning, it cannot fail to strike us that those intellectual faculties, upon the proper use of which so much is made to depend, form but one portion of the complex economy of man. He has a heart to fear the anger, to rejoice in the bounty, and to love the goodness of his Maker. He has

¹ Watson's Apology for Christianity.

imagination, by which he is transported from the present into the future, from the world that lies around him to that which is invisible and distant; by which, also, he is enabled to combine the images that outward events and forms have left impressed upon the memory, into new and infinitely various objects of mental vision. It is evident, then, that were we left to conjecture the probable conditions of a supposed future revelation, it would never occur to us as reasonable to anticipate that the divine message would be addressed solely, or even chiefly, to one portion of the mental frame and constitution of a being so variously endowed; namely, to the purely intellectual power of inference and comparison. We are speaking simply of the first contact of the mind with religious truth; and it is contended that one isolated fragment of our compound nature is neither competent in itself, nor could be designed by our Creator, to entertain the vast and diversified object which is then presented to it. An obvious illustration is supplied by that metaphorical use of terms denoting faculties of sense, which occurs so frequently in Holy Scripture, in connexion with this very subject². Although

² We might, indeed, attempt to raise an actual argument in favour of our proposition upon the visible analogy pervading the works of God, by which a real connexion is sometimes indicated between corresponding portions of the natural and spiritual world, as type and antitype, or as varied expressions

each sense affords a distinct and, so far as it reaches, a complete point of contact with the external world, yet we find that no material object conveys a distinct image of all its properties to the mind through any single organ of perception. The report of one sense is of necessity inadequate, and, being inadequate, is deceptive if regarded as complete. So neither does the spiritual world, to which we have access through Christ, address itself to our perception through the "hearing heart," while to the "eyes of the understanding" it presents neither form nor colour. The end of revelation is, the sanctification of the whole man. It is the will of Him who gave it, that His word should touch with healing every organ of the soul, and supply a holy object to every faculty and affection that is endowed with power to entertain "the things pertaining to His kingdom."

Another reference to Scripture will further illustrate and perhaps recommend this truth. St. Paul speaks of the "spirit and soul and body" of the Christian, as if he conceived them all capable of divine relations, and elsewhere he exhorts his con-

of the same divine idea. Many, however, who would concede the general principle, might disallow its application in a particular case. We can merely say, therefore, that if this instance be allowed, the example of the senses has great force in obviating objections, and if it be considered only probable, it should have some weight with those who choose the safe side in a case of doubt.

verts to "glorify God in their body and in their spirit³." Yet, at the same time that he expresses a distinction of parts, he makes the one individual man the proper agent and recipient in the duties and the privileges of religion. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless." The Creator and sustainer of the whole man exacts the united homage of every part; the external worship of the lips and knees, as well as the devotion of the heart and spirit. The very instinct of nature, unaided by any positive teaching, would lead us at once to condemn a religion which came before the mind as a bare system of outward acts, of genuflection and prostration, of mere tone and manner and conventional expression, and thus appeared to glorify God in the body while the heart was far from Him. And on the other hand, we have a distrust, as natural and equally well founded, of those religious feelings which do not express themselves after the manner of all human affections, which fail to move those who profess them to "fall down and kneel before the Lord their Maker." The Spirit of love and holiness can animate and sanctify the speech and gesture, as truly as the unseen movements of the soul; and there will be

³ 1 Thess. v. 23; 1 Cor. vi. 20.

a radiance on the face when the saint has been alone upon the mount with God.

The above reflections have a twofold use: they throw light upon the proposition, that the word of God does not limit its communications to any single faculty, and at the same time suggest a caution which is rendered necessary by the language that we are obliged to employ in such discussions. It is usual to speak of the soul as if it were capable of distribution into distinct parts: a defect of language which has given rise to much error and confusion. The various powers of man may, indeed, be classified, as we distinguish different properties in the same substance; but we cannot carry the distributive process beyond this without greatly exaggerating the evils of the fall. It is true that we have in this respect, as in others, degenerated from the original design of our Creator, yet there is still sufficient resemblance to a "city that is at unity in itself," to justify the conclusion that, to act agreeably to our whole nature is to act in obedience to the will of God⁴. Human nature, though corrupt, retains the character of a constitution, as being compacted of many mutually dependent elements; and, therefore, our idea of it would be essentially incomplete, if it did not include the rela-

⁴ See Bishop Butler, Pref. to Sermons, p. ix.

tions of the several components to each other. Now, to apply this consideration, by way of argument, to our immediate purpose: it may be urged that, if a proposed remedial system be indeed of divine origin, it will certainly be adapted to the actual state of man; that it will therefore recognize that approximate unity which remains, and have a tendency to reproduce the perfect harmony that originally subsisted among the constituents of our being. But these conditions cannot be satisfied unless each constituent is treated with a careful regard to its connexion with every other and to its function and importance in the whole; for it is evident that we shall only be aggravating disorder into anarchy, if we labour to inform and cultivate any one faculty of the soul as if it were self-sustained and independent of the rest.

II. As the evils which result from the neglect of sound principles, though not strictly the most conclusive, are yet often the best practical test of their importance, which is available to common use, it is desirable to notice briefly some of the more obvious consequences of the error now under consideration. In so doing, we need not fear to employ those comprehensive terms which designate the attributes or functions of the soul in popular discourse, since they are sufficiently distinctive for the occasion. It should be remarked, also, by way of preface, that, inasmuch as all educational development of man

is slow and gradual, the tendency of any system of intellectual or moral discipline, when judged from its results, can only be correctly ascertained from observation of characters which have been for a long time subjected to its sole, or at least to its predominating influence.

(1.) For the first example, we may instance the consequences which ensue, when the religious training is of such a character that the imagination has been powerfully excited, without any corresponding effect being produced upon the feelings or the understanding. It is usual to observe in persons whose religious capabilities have been thus partially developed, a rapturous and poetical sensibility to those picturesque and beautiful associations which hover around the history of our faith, a keen delight in the Christian exercise of art, an admiration of the comprehensive grandeur of idea displayed in the kingdom of God on earth, sometimes a real though vague awe of the mysteries of faith, and, in ambitious minds, a stirring desire of strife and victory—whether of the pen or sword—in what they believe to be the cause of Christ. In the mean time, self-discipline has been neglected, the life is barren of good works, and the mind imperfectly instructed, and inadequately influenced by holy principle. The Gospel, despoiled of its true meaning, and therefore of its power, has become like the teaching of the Prophet, “as a very lovely song of one that hath

a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument ⁵." It is heard with pleasure, but is not obeyed.

It would have been well for mankind if the rulers of the Church had been always on their guard against the temptation to encourage this religion of the imagination; but it must be confessed that most ages of Christianity have seen, at least in some important branches of the Church, an undue prominence systematically assigned to those means of instruction by which the imagination might be affected and impressed. It is desirable that we should avoid specifying the mistakes of the present day beyond what is needful for our direct purpose; lest our general conclusion should thereby be prejudiced with those who might differ in opinion upon such details. The system of the mediæval Church will supply a safer illustration; as few will be found to deny that she afforded a partial and imperfect exhibition of the Gospel to the general mind of Christendom. She was not unfaithful to her great task of teaching the knowledge of God and the general duties of the Christian life; but she endeavoured to impart a false charm and an earthly splendour to the severe religion of the Cross, and to allure men by a shadow when the divine reality had failed to subdue their waywardness. Thus incen-

⁵ Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

tives to the imagination were made to supply the place of moral culture, and the admiration of the worldly heart became the standard of that excellence which men were taught to regard as the condition of acceptance with their Maker. To this cause, for example, must it be attributed that, while many of the institutes of chivalry deserve our praise, there was so much in the whole system indicative of a worldly and unchastened temper, which, equally with that which was excellent, is referable to the influence and teaching of the Church from whose lessons it received its moral tone and inspiration⁶. Of the same mixed nature, and springing from the same source, were the views and feelings which, under the guise of a religious zeal, sustained, in great measure the wonderful movement of the cru-

⁶ "The usages, sentiments, and circumstances of every kind which accompanied the admission of a young man into the rank of a vassal soldier came under the empire of two influences. . . . These were *religion* and *imagination*." The following are clauses of the oath once exacted of the chevalier: "That he would fear, reverence, and serve God religiously, combat for the faith with all good will, and rather die a thousand deaths than renounce Christianity."—"That he would be incited to good actions—not by the hope of reward, or gain, or profit—but for *glory* and virtue alone."—"That he would fight for the general welfare of all."—"That he would never refuse to fight a man who might challenge him."—*The Lord and the Vassal*, c. 12.—See Scott's Prose Works, vol. vi. p. 14.

The obligation to *combat for the faith*, illustrates the two other subjects to which the text refers, the ethical character of the crusades and the treatment of misbelievers.

sades. If the haughty and fierce champions of the meek and lowly Jesus felt more reverence for the earth once trodden by His feet than anxiety to follow in the steps of His most holy life⁷; if they displayed more devotion to His forsaken tomb than to His name and will, they only felt and acted in accordance with that representation of His Gospel, which had been set before them. Not altogether different in its origin, as we may hope, was the universal belief that it is lawful, nay, rather, that it is a duty, for the Christian in authority to inflict suffering and death upon the unrepenting misbeliever. The most humane and holy men felt themselves constrained to act upon this principle, which was justified by those who suffered, no less than by those who made them suffer. It may be feared that at a later period, it was often defended and put in practice from motives more exclusively unchristian; but, at first, it probably obtained acceptance as an expression of exalted loyalty to Church and creed, a form of championship for God and truth, in keeping with the imaginative religion of the day. By thus arming herself with the terrors of avenging power, the Church reversed, indeed, her ancient boast and true claim to glory: this weapon of her warfare was not spiritual but carnal⁸; but we may safely pronounce her guilt to have been less, if she

⁷ Scott's Essay on Chivalry, as before, p. 48.

⁸ 2 Cor. x. 4.

was led astray by an extravagance of pious sentiment, and the perversion of a godly jealousy. We are speaking of the age of splendid sin; in which heroism was confounded with virtue, and power with greatness; in which men preferred the courage of the soldier to the fortitude of the Christian, and were more ready to sympathize with the destroying zeal of the devout Israelite, than with the more chastened spirit by which it has been superseded in the requirements of the Gospel. All goodness both in theory and practice was alloyed by the admixture of much evil; while to the many the evil was disguised, or even consecrated, by the presence of undoubted good.

(2.) Results equally mischievous have attended every system of instruction, the peculiarity of which has been an exclusive or disproportionate excitement of the feelings. At the outset we have some reason to be jealous of any prominence assigned to these properties of human nature, inasmuch as they differ only from the corresponding emotions of the inferior animals in their mode of expression, their range of objects, and subordination to more noble faculties. The presumption thus raised is confirmed by experience.

If the promises of God and the glories that shall be revealed are made the theme of an exciting eloquence, the natural and, with the mass of serious men, the inevitable effect is a presumptuous assu-

rance of the divine favour, an enthusiastic longing for communion with God in Christ, and a professed love to Him that is both unreal in its nature and unchastened in expression; emotions so merely passionate, so earthly in their source and character, that they are sometimes found most active and intense, where least thought is given to that purity of heart which is alone capable of heavenly desires and the true love and fear of God. Again, if, on the other hand, an undue prominence be given to the preaching of the "terrors of the Lord," and wrath be not tempered with mercy, the temptation presented to the disciple by such a system of religious teaching, will indeed be different in kind, but will equally imperil the substantial growth of faith and piety. Experience gives us reason to fear, lest he should revolt at the description of his Maker so little in accordance with that outline which the mere instinct of natural piety may trace out by the aid of observation, and thus be led to harden himself against the force of truth, because it appears in a repulsive form; or else, if he be disposed by nature to reverence and docility, lest his whole soul should be filled with "a fearful looking for of judgment," a state not compatible with charity, the life of faith, and not necessarily implying even a real sense of his inherent sinfulness and of the hatefulness of sin.

Another instructive instance may be seen in the

dark history of many a fanatical sect, whose severe and exclusive dogmatism, enforced by vehement harangues, has elicited the more stern and masculine emotions of the heart, without providing against their tendency to excess by applying the purifying influence of a holy awe, or infusing the softening elements of humility and love. To such unfaithful dealing with the word of God, and with the souls of men, may be traced many of the worst sins and crimes by which hypocrisy has brought discredit on the Christian name. Trained in this school, professed followers of Him whose most frequent lesson was one of lowliness and meekness, have been distinguished by vices the most contrary to those central graces of His law;—by a proud and self-reliant spirit in the professed pursuit of truth, a bigoted and oftentimes furious zeal for whatever false opinion has for the day usurped that sacred name, a factious, disobedient temper, blindness to the good in others, and hatred or contempt of all who believe more humbly and more wisely. Inflamed by such motives, the Donatists of old, and the extreme Puritans of later times, defied and assailed all authority, ecclesiastical and civil, and were hurried on to assert the supremacy of their delusions at the expense of every natural and social right. In the Church of Rome, a more specious system of religious ethics has equally invested those malignant passions with the name and character of Christian

graces. Under this disguise, they have been made subservient to the supposed interests of religion through the medium of the Inquisition ; or have displayed themselves in cruelty and oppression on the part of rulers, in massacre and sedition among the people, and no less remarkably, in the perversely immoral theories, and enormous crimes of individuals among the Jesuits. There is no difficulty in tracing a large portion of these evils to the operation of certain false principles for the inculcation of which the religious teachers of the Roman communion have been largely responsible ; but, even if this were less clear than it is, their source might be identified by the sanction and encouragement, which at one time or another they have received from high ecclesiastical authorities—in some cases, from the highest.

III. It will be remembered that the first design of these remarks on the over-cultivation of the feelings and the imagination is to illustrate the danger of giving an exclusive or excessive religious training to any one faculty of man. At the same time they are suggestive of an argument from analogy. The ill effects of every attempt to raise the fabric of personal religion wholly or chiefly on a foundation of mere feeling, or mere imagination, or on both together, to the neglect of the just exercise of the reasoning power, create a strong presumption against a similar reliance on the exclusive or

disproportionate exercise of the reasoning power itself.

Here, perhaps, a few words will be well spent in describing the manner in which these mischievous results are brought to pass, although the principle to be explained is in some respects very obvious, and lies near the surface in every man's experience of himself. A complete analysis will not, of course, be attempted, as the object is merely to illustrate and confirm the conclusion to which we have been guided.

The soul of man has been so constituted, that a relation is necessarily created between two ideas, or between a feeling and an idea, not previously connected with each other, by the mere fact of their being frequently associated together in our inward experience. At first, perhaps, they can only be said to occupy the field of consciousness at the same time; but, at last, such a mutual dependence is established between them, that when the cause which brought them together has ceased to operate, the one is found spontaneously to suggest the other. But, owing to the imperfections of our present state, an artificial association of this kind cannot take place without some injury to similar affinities existing previously—whether these have arisen, in like manner, from habit, or are founded upon the innate and instinctive judgments of the heart and mind. The combination of thought or

feeling with fresh elements of knowledge, or reflection, involves a partial disengagement of the interest or memory from former centres of attachment. Thus by degrees the contexture of our inward beings resolves itself into another shape. Actions, images, and feelings no longer succeed each other according to the old law of sequence. The same point of departure does not lead to the same end, because the new association induces a divergence from the accustomed line of progress. After a time it becomes apparent that the person has adopted new views on subjects of intellectual interest, or that his character has undergone a change, or most likely both. He appears possessed by quite another spirit, and, as it is often expressed, he is no longer the same man.

Now this course of inward action must necessarily take place with reference to religion as well as any other subject-matter; and, this being the case, we certainly have strong reason to apprehend an injurious result, when we see the history and doctrines of Revelation habitually treated as we are accustomed to treat objects of mere abstract speculation. There must arise a distinct, though perhaps unconscious tendency, to regard religion as a science, and thus to divest it of its practical character as a principle of action, and silently supersede its pretensions to control the heart and conscience. To some extent this result must follow, whatever

be the views and feelings of those who venture in this manner to touch the ark of God with an unhallowed hand ; whether they be infidels who profess to be examining the evidences of religion ; or believers, attempting, by an unnatural as well as profane effort, to review them without the bias of belief ; or young and half-instructed Christians, who through want of care in teachers, or from a mistaken theory of education, have been led to include them among their ordinary intellectual exercises. And this tendency will often exist and form a dangerous temptation even where there has once been, as far as man may judge, a due degree of Christian meekness and docility. Unless we keep a perpetual and constant watch against the irreverent encroachments of the intellect, the seeming strength of faith will be but weakness in the day of trial,—a truth confirmed by many sad examples of, at least partial, defection, afforded by men who were at one time zealous for the faith. And, if a limited result of this kind follows in the case of any who are really good and earnest men, the most open rejection of the truth must be expected from those who have experienced in less degree the power and value of religious motives. As such persons become habituated to the merely intellectual view of evidence, or doctrine, they pass rapidly from a state of reverent interest in sacred things to one of speculative doubt, or mere indifference, and gradu-

ally but surely lose all practical sense of the essential relation between revelation from God and faith in man, between principle and feeling, between law and obedience. Thus unhappily prepared for more decided dereliction, they are soon brought to regard the faith they have professed as a mere science of words and phrases, and to forget, if not even to renounce, its claim to be a rule of action and a source of moral strength. A cold, impractical temper is gradually formed, which deadens every principle of action and affection, until love towards God, the first law of nature no less than of Revelation, appears to the distempered heart and mind a vision of enthusiasm; and love towards man, however warmly it may be professed, degenerates, in fact, into a lifeless and delusive theory of universal charity. The sense of personal interest in the truth of Revelation is imperceptibly extinguished, and, in extreme cases, there remains at last, even when the attention has been most firmly held by a religious question, only the same feeling of gratification which attends the conscious exercise of intellectual power, and the formation of opinion, upon subjects of a purely speculative nature. From these causes it has arisen that in a philosophizing, no less than in an imaginative age, men devoid of piety and active charity, and in some cases even notoriously corrupt in morals, have not been ashamed to stand before the world, as the strong advocates of some peculiar

doctrine or system of religion. It has become to them as a mere literary or party question, though they may be far from knowing this themselves; and their conduct in respect of it is regulated, whether consciously or not, on corresponding principles. It is evident, also, that their claim to judge of sacred things, however indefensible on moral grounds, is supported by the secret sympathy of the unthinking multitude; for we may observe that, unless the public hostility be provoked by some independent cause, the voice of general censure is seldom raised to rebuke the incongruous exhibition of disobedience to religion even in the most forward partisans of a religious sect or doctrine.

IV. It is evident that nothing but the degeneracy of human nature, as taught in Holy Scripture, could account for its liability to these evils from the cause that has been assigned. If man had preserved the moral equilibrium and spiritual perfection in which he was created, such injury could not have accrued from the excessive activity of one particular element. In a complete adjustment of the system, the effect of forces acting on one point would be impartially distributed throughout the whole. If the reasoning faculty were addressed by argument, the feelings and imagination would be adequately affected as soon as the conclusion was admitted. Again, the cogency of the reasoning would depend on its correctness only, the adventitious help of pre-

judice or passion being neither employed nor needed in the process of conviction. Or, suppose the feelings to be first moved by an external impulse, immediate attention would be given to the exciting cause; curiosity would be roused, the discursive faculty be set in motion, and the mind led onward to the recognition of some latent truth, and to the gratifying sense of intellectual possession. And the object which thus engaged the faculties would be impressed on every portion of the internal frame, according to its nature and capacity, with equal distinctness and effect; as, when an electric stream is transmitted through connected masses of a conducting substance, its brilliancy is as vivid and its force as great when it escapes from the last as when it was communicated to the first.

Such, we may well suppose, was the primitive constitution of human nature, and such is the state to which all human excellence is tending; but fatal would be the error of the moralist who should make this now impossible condition of humanity the basis of his system. The disturbing force of sin has deranged the whole being of man, and miserably impaired, although (as was before remarked) it has not annihilated, the harmony and mutual dependence of the several functions of the soul. The impression received by one is not faithfully conveyed by it to another; but there is a loss of power and vividness at every transmission; as in the refraction of a ray

of light by successive media of imperfect transparency. In this sense, therefore, it is not fully true, that if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it:" for it is evident that, owing to the partial interruption of their mutual relations, a mode of treatment which increases the effective power of one constituent of our nature, regarded by itself, may at the same time contribute little, or perhaps nothing, to the well-being of the whole. The affections may be sufficiently developed while the imagination and the understanding are allowed to lie fallow; or these, on the other hand, may be well cultivated and bring forth fruits of increase, while the heart is not duly influenced by one legitimate desire, or hope, or fear.

But nature, whether neglected and left to herself, or oppressed by a false system, never fails to avenge herself by evils far worse than mere barrenness. A positive injury of no slight magnitude is accordingly inflicted upon man by the unequal cultivation of his reasonable being. While an artificial luxuriance shows where appropriate care has been bestowed, but with a partial and lavish hand, a rank growth of weeds deforms the region that has been given over to empiricism or neglect. To this cause may generally be traced the formation of that cast of character which we are wont to term *eccentric*. It is not unusual to observe persons, whose

education has been thus faulty and imperfect, displaying upon some occasions, and in reference to particular pursuits, a thoughtful interest and energy, which, though perhaps exceeding the emergency, produces all the results, and secures the praise of high practical skill, or even wisdom, as the case may be ; while, at other times, when different qualities of mind or heart are required by the occasion, they speedily betray the original defect of their training, by striking incapacity and absence of self-management, or ignorance of right method. Among the peculiarities commonly arising from this cause are the direction of the affections to improper objects, the perversion of the moral instincts, wild schemes of life and theories of society, unfounded and fanciful opinions in things indifferent, and a superfluous excitement in their propagation and defence. It is well known also, among persons accustomed to the treatment of insanity, that early mismanagement during the period of education is a very frequent though remote cause of that malady, which displays itself in intellectual aberration, or the uncontrollable excess of passion, according to the wrong bias originally given, and the habits of the individual thereby induced. Leaving this extreme case, however, we may refer to the very common observation, that great genius for the arts of poetry or design is often attended by a certain degree of

mental or moral derangement. Unfortunately this has been true in fact, though it is equally true, on the other hand, that the perfect artist must be both sound in mind and pure in morals. He whose works are truly great lays the foundation of his power in his own moral and intellectual greatness, and his conceptions find an answer in the love and sympathy of kindred souls. The observation does not touch him; but it does describe too well the state of many a poet and painter, who has received noble gifts from Heaven, and by partial excellence in their use has attained a lasting name, who notwithstanding lived the wretched slave of vice, or was barely saved from evident insanity. The unhappy peculiarity must be ascribed to the excessive and disproportionate cultivation of the imaginative faculty, which destroys the balance and adjustment of the whole reasonable being⁹. Equally to our

⁹ "The registers of the Bicêtre, for a series of years, show that, even when madness affects those who belong to the educated classes, it is chiefly seen in those whose education has been imperfect or irregular, and very rarely indeed in those whose minds have been fully, equally, and systematically exercised. Priests, artists, painters, sculptors, poets, and musicians, whose professions so often appear marked in that register, are often persons of very limited or exclusive education; their faculties have been unequally exercised; they have commonly given themselves up too much to imagination, and have neglected comparison, and have not habitually exercised the judgment."—*Conolly on Insanity*, p. 191. "An irregular and injudicious cultivation of poetry and painting has often concurred to pro-

purpose is a complaint which we often hear urged against the study of the pure sciences. It is said that the exclusive pursuit and contemplation of mathematical truth has a tendency to deaden the affections, to unfit men for the active charities of life, and to engender irreverence and impatience of mystery in the things of God.

V. But here the solemn thought presents itself, that any course of action which tends to such results as these must be a transgression of the will of God, and, in its degree, incur the guilt, and merit the reproach, of sin. There appears no sound reason for distrusting this conclusion, though it is one from which we naturally shrink, because its application to individuals, in whom some higher quality of mind is disproportionately developed, is both painful and invidious. It is sufficient that such persons are fostering the principle of disorder and confusion which the sin of Adam has introduced into the harmonious design of God. We cannot of course attempt to measure the degree of guilt, but we may confidently assert that it is as real and substantial, though not, we may be sure, so great and fatal, as the guilt of one who lives only to gratify his animal appetites, or of another whose higher powers are dissipated by frivolity, or drained of their capacity for good by the enfeebling influence of a false and idle sentiment.

duce madness."—*Ibid.*, p. 347, as cited in Barlow's "Essay on Man's Power over himself to prevent Insanity," p. 60.

The remarks which have been made in this chapter appear to assume peculiar force, when applied to that subject on account of which they have been brought forward. One great object of the revelation of God by Jesus Christ is the restoration of our nature from its present state of dislocation and disorder, and its redemption from the resulting liability to suffering. It therefore enjoins a rule of life which, if followed with sincerity and constancy, would make man at one with himself, and save him from the burden of all subsequent guilt. It follows, that any attempt to recommend the Gospel to the unbeliever, or to enforce its teaching on the professed believer, which, by its necessary operation, tends to perpetuate the defects of their fallen nature, and to increase their guilt, is inconsistent with the very end at which it aims, and self-convicted of irrelevancy. In short, the reasons that have been urged appear to reduce the principle of such teaching to a paradox of the most evident falsehood: for to assert it would be to imply that it is lawful to “do evil that good may come¹”; that, to obtain the knowledge, and merit the approbation, of our Maker, we may disturb what He has planned, and disregard His will,—in other words, that the first step to holiness is a step taken in “the way of wickedness.”

¹ Rom. iii. 8.

CHAPTER III.

THE inquiry upon which we entered in the last chapter has respect to a principle of so much practical importance to all who would acquire, and all who would impart, a beneficial knowledge of religious truth, that it cannot be deemed superfluous if, before passing on to another part of our subject, we proceed to adduce some other considerations in support of the conclusion at which we have arrived.

It was maintained that the Christian teacher, who should endeavour to promote the knowledge of God by the exclusive use of reasoning and argument, would fulfil his mission as inadequately as if, on the other hand, he practically regarded his disciple as a being of mere feeling, or mere imagination. We found reason to think that, when a communication is vouchsafed from God to man, it is required by the nature of man and his relation to his Maker, that every higher faculty should be simultaneously exercised upon it, that the whole being may be penetrated and permeated by the

saving virtue of the Word, that the understanding may be enlightened, the imagination chastened, the affections purified, and all together "brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

The arguments about to be adduced in confirmation of this principle, like those already employed, derive all their point and force from the corruption which sin has wrought in human nature.

I. It is confessed that all our faculties are more or less disqualified, through the effects of the fall, for the efficient performance of the functions that have been assigned to them in relation to the things of God. There naturally, therefore, arises in our mind a suspicion of latent error, when we behold a work so important, and a burden so oppressive, thrown, for whatever reasons, on the unassisted strength of one degenerate faculty. To be more explicit, our nature is not simply disorganized as a whole by the intestine conflict of its component elements, but each several element is vitiated and corrupt. The withering breath of sin has passed over every part, and blighted all that it has touched. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the soul of the foot, even to the head, there is no soundness in it." The will, once firm and stedfast, because conformed to the unchanging will of God, has thrown off the yoke of duty, and wavers to and fro at the ever-varying impulses of passion or caprice. The affections are

alienated from their noblest objects, the attributes and spiritual works of God, by which their holiest and happiest emotions should be evoked and exercised, and inconstant because dissatisfied rove restlessly among the transient interests and unsubstantial pleasures of this world. The imagination, which should rise on wings of love, dwelling and worshipping with angels before the throne of God, descends to low dreams of earthly good and beauty. Even when it finds strength to lift itself above the range of sensuous illusions, it soars only to be lost less basely, but not less fatally, in the more subtle snare of a more splendid sin. The powers of memory and intuition have shared the general decay, and lost their quick grasp and steady hold of facts and principles. The wings of thought move slowly, and beat the air with effort and uncertainty. A sense of fettered strength, of opposition and impediment, attends every exertion of the intellect, somewhat as when one struggles in a dream against an overbearing evil, and every hope of aid appears to fail when it is most needed, and every seeming success proves but a partial failure, and every labour ends but to begin anew. "The thoughts of mortal man are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain, for the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things." To the soul thus oppressed and struggling in its bondage, the

Gospel brings the only remedy that can enable it to emerge from its lost state, and regain the strength and purity of its original creation. Here, then, is a work proposed to us which might well exact, as it deserves, the united exertion of all our powers of soul in their most perfect and efficient state. So long, therefore, as each member of the rational frame remains enfeebled or diseased, it is manifestly unreasonable to assume that less than the combined energy of all will be sufficient for the appointed task. It is impossible that the unassisted intellect should be competent to pursue and realize religious truth, which even our first parents were not able to retain, in its practical form of spiritual wisdom, though governed by a firm will and guided by the pure sympathies of an uncorrupted heart.

II. The same presumption is raised, if we consider the remedial nature and design of true religion. We should anticipate with reasonable confidence, that the application of the renovating principle would be co-extensive with the injuries it was employed to heal. The care and skill of the physician is not confined to one member, when the whole frame is shattered or diseased. He does not wait till he has restored one part to soundness, before he binds and tends another. And obviously the natural principle on which he acts has its strict counterpart in morals. It would be of no avail, even if it were possible, to allay the present turbu-

lence of passions to which indulgence has given an unnatural strength, if the will were not strengthened to resist the future inroads of temptation. Equally useless would it be to remove the barriers which prejudice and ignorance oppose to the ingress of truth, if full license were still allowed to an imagination suggestive of nought but sin and vanity. In short, we are able to discern the existence of a general law, in accordance with which we may proceed to infer, that the most perfect conviction of the reasoning powers can produce no effectually good result, unless the other faculties are, at the same time, so far subjected to the ameliorating influence of truth, as to become sensible of its claims, according to their nature, while the understanding submits itself to the force of argument.

III. It appears to be often, perhaps unconsciously, assumed, that man is endowed with some master principle of action, which exercises a necessary control over the inferior members of the soul, so that if this be once gained over to accept a proposition as worthy of belief and interest, it will, as a matter of course, insure its due influence over the whole rational being. It needs, however, but a slight degree of consideration to dissipate this error. Our moral unity has been disturbed by sin. The clearest intellectual view of truth has no essential power to mould the will, to regulate the fancy, or control the passions. The general powers of

the mind may be enlarged by a comprehensive knowledge of those facts from which the premises are drawn, the reasoning faculty may be well exercised upon the argument, and have a clear perception of the logical value of each inference, and, after all, no advance be made towards that great end, for the promotion of which a revelation is vouchsafed, the love of God in Jesus Christ, and of the brethren for His sake.

The inadequacy of the mere intellect to sustain the part so often assigned to it in reference to religion, is rendered still more evident, when we consider that it has no inherent energy, derived from and centering in itself, to support it in the painful accumulation of knowledge, and carry it through the laborious investigation of disputed truths. Its powers of application and endurance are borrowed from the will; nay, more, it cannot be set in motion at all without a voluntary effort, though, when the effort is habitual and slight, we are not always conscious of making it. This is the case at least in the ordinary and natural condition of our minds. There are times, indeed, in which, though the impelling power no longer acts, or is even exerted in the reverse direction, the activity it has excited does not cease. From habits of excessive application, or from undue excitement, the mind appears to become independent of the will, and pursues its restless career in spite of every

effort to control it. But these are known as instances of irregularity and disorder, approaching to disease, and do not militate against the general law,—that effort, and a consciousness of effort, towards the proposed end, must attend and sustain every process of the intellect involving real difficulty, and therefore demanding real exertion. Now, the will is stimulated to activity and effort only through the passions and affections. It therefore appears manifest that, if we desire to produce a sound and practical conversion to the faith, we ought to supply moral inducements to inquiry and incitements to belief, at the same time that we submit its theoretic evidences to the consideration of the intellect.

The part borne by the affections in every mental process of any labour and duration, is illustrated by a very obvious fact. We find by the sad experience of every day, that if the moral impulse acts irregularly or in excess, the intellect is enfeebled by that which, acting in due manner and degree, supports and animates it. And this effect of sinful habits is most conspicuous when religion is the subject upon which the mind is exercised. The fact is patent and undeniable, and presents a striking exemplification of that law which decrees the forfeiture of the abused or neglected gift of God, and makes escape from evil a work of toil and pain to those who have loved and chosen it. The

manner in which these results are brought to pass is in part withdrawn from human sight and scrutiny, but so much as is left open to investigation is, on all accounts, deserving of most serious attention.

(1.) It cannot be doubted that use and exercise are as essential to the well-being of the mind as of the body. Its general vigour and accuracy of thinking, its freedom of motion and promptness of intuition, are only to be maintained by unremitted care and due exertion of its several powers. And, in particular, the effectiveness of the mind in any given department of thought varies in degree with the constancy and closeness of attention bestowed upon it. But an inquirer in religion, by the nature of the case, has no such familiarity with the object of his search, and consequently has but little knowledge of the right method of attaining to it. His mind, however capable of other and great things, is disqualified by disuse and ignorance for this particular pursuit. Surely, in this condition, he is not justified in dispensing with any aid that may present itself, though from one point of view it may seem to be but adventitious aid. He must compensate for the brief duration of his interest and attention by their intensity and earnestness. In other words, the object of his inquiry must strongly engage his feeling and imagination, while it employs his powers of discrimination and comparison.

(2.) Hitherto, however, we have supposed a case more favourable to the eventual attainment of the truth than it is possible to meet with among those who are without. The injuries inflicted on the mind by neglect and ignorance, and the difficulties which arise thence to impede its progress, are both few and insignificant compared with those which are caused by wilful disobedience to the known law of right. By wilful sin the soul has betrayed itself into an enemy's hand. If unhappily the transgressions are various and repeated, the mind thenceforth becomes the battle-field of a thousand contending follies. Desires without an object, hopes and fears without a cause, impure or frivolous imaginations, whether suggested by ideas or feelings to which evil custom has allied them, or spontaneous and utterly irrelevant, seize all its faculties by a perpetual inroad, destroy its unity of thought and purpose, and forcibly abstract it from every serious employment.

(3.) To these obstructions to the free course of truth, we must add the bias which naturally exists in sinful minds against conclusions that are known, or even suspected, to interfere with any long-cherished habit or belief. Such a prejudice will operate even after a considerable amendment in the moral state has taken place, for it will be felt that the sincere acknowledgment of Christian truth must still involve self-condemnation for the past, and

produce, for a time at least, a painful sense of guilt, and a fearful apprehension for the future.

(4.) It is notorious that professed unbelievers in a Christian land almost invariably labour under these disadvantages in their most aggravated form. Their standard of morals is seldom high, and even if we had not the evidence of facts to guide us, we might reasonably assume of them, what we know to be true of others, that their actual practice falls in many things below the principles by which they confess their conduct should be ruled. At all events, such persons have sinned fearfully by a continual rejection of the Gospel, which, whether true or not as a religion, is found to furnish the most perfect form of moral doctrine ever exhibited to mankind; upon which, therefore, it is undeniably their duty to bestow a most reverent and serious attention. If their unbelief has proceeded to active hostility against the religion thus recommended to their moral sympathies, it seems impossible to acquit them of great wickedness, whatever be the circumstances which have attended their apostasy. Those who have thus deliberately taken part with Antichrist appear even in a less hopeful state than if they had been left in total ignorance of the Gospel, because the chief obstacles to the formation of a right faith are those created by past acts of opposition to truth and goodness. On the other hand, to be quite just and consistent, we must not

forget that there is also much wilful choice of evil in the gross moral perversion, the sensual and selfish wickedness, of the ordinary heathen. In short, in every class of unbelievers we should be justified in assuming the presence of a great moral disqualification for the pursuit of sacred truth. But, in order to test the principle which has been laid down, let us suppose the extreme, and in truth impossible, case of one who, ignorant of the aids and sanctions of the Christian religion, has yet maintained from early youth a strict habit of self-discipline, and a consistent and punctual observance of the moral law. It is certain that even the heart thus trained and prepared would offer no slight resistance from insensibility, or positive aversion, both to the pressure of evidence and the natural force of truth. A person possessed of the very greatest power of self-control cannot assume at will an interest in the subject of inquiry. He has to contend against the inertness natural to all which indisposes men for change and trouble. No one can act without a motive, and in the case before us a motive has to be supplied sufficient to produce and sustain a considerable exertion of the mental powers. Nor are we at liberty to assume, that our moral and enlightened heathen will be free from those prejudices which gather insensibly, as life advances, in all minds not duly influenced by Christian principle. We must remember also that prejudice is dislodged with

more difficulty from the mind of the considerate man, who habitually requires some reason for what he receives, than from the minds of those who are conscious that they take up opinion and belief at random. If it were right to make the attempt, it would not be possible for such an one to divest himself at once of opinions or impressions, whether deliberately or unconsciously adopted in the first instance, which through long-continued custom and familiarity have, as it were, grown into his very soul, and become parts of his intellectual and moral being. He has been moulded into his present self, whatever he may be, by the events and actions of his previous life, and is instinct with a subtle influence, of long and silent growth, which, though in a measure perhaps unknown to himself, affects and colours every thought and feeling. And this, we should remember, is the moral state towards which the best men among the heathen are only tending, but which, in its excellencies, they never realise. We may suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that such, in all its merits and demerits, is the character of an individual when he first hears the call of the missionary to believe in Jesus Christ. He then finds himself in contact with a subject more calculated to overwhelm the indolent, to irritate the pride of prejudice, more apt to provoke doubt and mistrust in the ignorant or mistaught, than any other which could engage his observation.

It is clear that he will not even enter on the question thus proposed to him, unless he be interested in it from the first, with more than an intellectual interest. This feeling we must supply. We must endeavour to impress on him the unspeakable importance of a right decision, and by that means communicate a powerful and sustained impulse to the will. We must seek for and apply such motives as may have power to move the deepest depths of his being, to take him out of himself and draw him into greater harmony with truth and goodness, to urge him forward and support him in his uncongenial task until he has derived from religion itself—what religion alone can give,—a secret principle of moral strength, and the divine elements of Christian thought and feeling.

IV. It also becomes a question whether the Christian teacher is not acting to the prejudice of his own cause, when he permits those whom he attempts to convert, to regard the form and substance of religion with resolute indifference, until they are critically satisfied of its authenticity. If we resist the effect which the exhibition of great qualities or unworldly principles is calculated to have upon the heart and imagination, we are in some measure destroying our own susceptibility of their influence: every act of opposition to good weakens our appreciation both of its character and of its claims on our alle-

giance and respect. The unbeliever, therefore, who, while pursuing his inquiry into the truth of a supposed revelation, refuses to take cognizance of its ethical character and unearthly attributes, is subjecting himself to a demoralizing process, which will both retard his conversion to the truth, and diminish its influence upon his mind and conduct after his conversion. He passes, it may be, from darkness into light ; but in his passage the faculty, which alone can enable him to use the light, is weakened and impaired. Conviction is but the beginning, not the end, of the Christian discipline. The revelation of God by Jesus Christ has opened to mankind a heart-filling communion with the world of spirits, and has given free scope, as well as adequate occasion, to the most sublime efforts of imagination and reflection, and to the most transporting exercise of the devout affections. The humbler duties of the Christian life are thus crowned with a high privilege, extending and exalting that divine discipline of the believing soul by which it is ever advancing to its maturity of strength and its investiture with the full beauty of holiness. It, therefore, behoves us to be cautious how we check the lofty aspirations of those who are beginning to "seek the Lord, if haply they may feel after Him and find Him," or trifle with their sense of spiritual loveliness ; lest, while we think only of adding proof to proof, our ill-judged method defraud us of success

by leaving a canker in the bud of faith that will mar its expansion into the perfect flower.

V. To the natural indolence of mankind, the force of prejudice, and the effect of moral disorder, whether proceeding from sinful habits, or the irreverent treatment of the subject of inquiry, we must add that impediment which arises from the necessary pursuits and occupations of our daily life. The thoughts and purposes of most men are hurried down the current of a stream to which they seldom feel a sufficient inducement to offer an effectual resistance. Some means of excitement, or power of moral suasion, must, therefore, be employed to detach them, even for a short space, from the things of time and sense, and concentrate their efforts upon the task before them. The declaration of a future life, resting, as at first it would appear to rest, upon human authority, will be as unreal as a dream to the eyes of an unregenerate and carnal man, in comparison of those substantial interests and enjoyments by which he is solicited on every side. The world is always with him, addressing every sense with flattery and promise, and offering some immediate satisfaction to every desire. The low distant warnings of futurity are lost in the importunate turmoil and agitation of the present. It is no cause of wonder, then, however much it be of sorrow, if men, so beset with temptations and entangled in difficulties, are found disposed to decline all

serious inquiry, and to acquiesce contentedly in unbelief, or in the first delusion which appears to offer peace. But surely we shall not be content to leave them here. The invitation to a dispassionate inquiry has failed from the absence of a lively interest, and a deficiency of moral strength: it clearly, then, becomes the duty of the teacher to search for and apply inducements to exertion, of such power and urgency as may incite the inert and carnal mind to rise against the tyranny of habit and the world, and assume, if but for a short time only, an attitude of earnest and truth-loving investigation. But such motives, to be adequate, must be borrowed from the religion itself². For example, the nature of that existence after death must be declared and strongly urged upon the hopes and fears of the hearer. Affections of the mind, excited by such

² The following sentence from the work of Arnobius, written immediately after he became convinced of the truth of Christianity, shows the weight which the hope of *greater advantage* is likely to have with the serious inquirer: "Vel propter id solum Eum deberetis amplecti, quod optabilia vobis spondeat et prospera, quod bonarum esset nuntius rerum, quod ea prædicaret quæ nullius animum læderent, securioris quinimo expectationis impleant."—L. i. sub fin. See also the Epistle to Diognetus, c. x. In Theophil. ad Autolyc. L. i. c. 14. ii. 34, we have an instance of appeal to the *fears* of a learned heathen studious in other things, but indifferent to the claims of the Gospel (L. iii. c. 4). The oblique and suggestive mention of future punishment in the Ep. to Diogn. (u. s.), a man of earnest character, and an anxious inquirer after truth, is worthy of remark.

means, are not unworthy of the degenerate reason of mankind, even before they have the warrant of a logical conviction. The interest must come first, and the investigation afterwards. By no other means will men be induced to break through their daily routine of thought and feeling, throw off their lifelong bondage to secular pursuits and customs, and devote their best energies to the determination of questions, which, from their education and habits of mind, must appear to them encumbered with so many difficulties.

VI. It may be urged, also, that the mind of man, so far as it is not corrupted by sinful habits, or warped by sophistry, is predisposed to receive whatever it may please our Maker to reveal to it; and that the exercise of this predisposition is as legitimate as any exertion of the pure intellect itself. There is in all a natural readiness to welcome any thing that purports to be a manifestation of the spiritual world³; and, therefore, we are doing violence to nature, if we attempt to maintain a fixed indifference to a revelation which professes

³ This may be illustrated by the language which Cicero has put into the mouth of philosophic disputants with reference to the doctrine of a future life. "*M. reliquorum (philosophorum) sententiæ spem afferunt, si te forte hoc delectat, posse animos, cum e corporibus excesserint, in cœlum quasi in domicilium suum pervenire. A. Me vero delectat: idque primum ita esse velim: deinde, si non sit, mihi tamen persuaderi velim.*"—*Tusc. Disp. i. 11.* "*Ego vero facile sum passus ne in mentem quidem mihi aliquid contra venire: ita isti faveo sententiæ.*"—*Ib. 23.*

to proceed from Heaven, until the understanding, acting as an impartial judge, shall have examined its pretensions, and pronounced a verdict in its favour. The same conclusion is apparent from a somewhat different point of view. We are taught by moralists that excessive regard to one portion of our being is the source of all vice and error, and no reason can be given why the understanding alone should be exempted from the operation of this rule. The wise and virtuous are those who ingenuously follow nature as a whole. No feeling of contempt or suspicion of imposture arises necessarily in the mind of such persons, when they hear it announced that a revelation has been vouchsafed from God to man. When they shall have learnt more of the religion proposed to them, they may perhaps find in it much that is calculated to provoke both; for it may be repugnant to truths already ascertained, or to their fixed moral habits and ideas; but a revelation, considered simply as an intimation of the will of God, the acknowledged Creator and Governor of the world, is certain to meet with serious and reverent attention, and to excite a deep interest in the thoughtful and unsophisticated mind. An aptness to doubt, much more a promptness to dispute and cavil, betrays a disposition cast in some other mould than that of simple nature, improved by the ordinary discipline of heathen life.

VII. We are led to the same inference if we proceed to argue from the great last Cause to what

might be expected in His all-wise design. It might be reasonably anticipated that if it should please God to make a revelation of Himself to man, He would, as it were, consider the nature which He has given to His creature, and frame His message of mercy according to that nature. If man were a purely intellectual being, we might be confident that a complete appreciation of the divine word would be possible, without the intervention of affections which he did not possess. If his nature were simply passionate, the dispensation of God would not assume in him the attributes of understanding and reason. His real nature, we should say, whatever it might be, would in every case decide the mode in which he was addressed. And as we advance from hypothesis to the actual constitution of humanity, we do not perceive that any condition has been introduced which precludes the application of the same principle. We may conclude, therefore, that the dispensation which proceeds from Him who made, and therefore knows what is in man, will recognise the mixed being which we have derived from Him, and that the form and manner, as well as the substance of the divine communication, will be adapted from the first to all the several and combined capacities of heart and mind, by which He enables us to ascend towards Him, and seek the renewal of our fallen nature, "in His image and after His likeness."

CHAPTER IV.

IN the two preceding chapters certain considerations have been adduced with a view to prove the inutility and even danger of providing only for an intellectual apprehension of the truth of Revelation, when we address our efforts to the conversion of the unbeliever, or the edification of the Christian. It has been contended that one portion of our reasonable frame is not, by the law of nature, more interested than any other in those great questions, the solution of which proceeds from Heaven alone, and that the exclusive employment of the thinking powers on such a subject must be attended by results subversive of the very end supposed to be in view. The reasons hitherto advanced in support of these positions have been derived solely from the acknowledged properties of human nature, corrupted, as we confess it to be, both by transmitted sinfulness, and by the personal transgressions of the individual.

Pursuing the same argument, we now proceed to show that consequences repugnant to the merely intellectual perception of the evidences of religion

are involved in the very hypothesis of a revelation, regarded as a communication from God to man, and viewed in connexion with their mutual relation. The succeeding step will be to prove, that the exclusive use of this medium of conversion is, in a remarkable degree, discredited, both indirectly and directly, by the actual Revelation which it has pleased God to make of Himself through Jesus Christ.

I. It is evident that the force of much that is about to be alleged, must vary with the magnitude of the interest supposed to be dependent on the acceptance or rejection of an assumed revelation, viewed simply as a revelation, and without reference to its actual contents. It must therefore be observed, for the sake of our argument, that those who allow the possibility of a Divine interference for the instruction of mankind, do thereby confess their belief, that a certain degree of importance must belong to a communication of that kind. The extraordinary nature of the means employed avouches the greatness of the end pursued. When so many discoveries affecting the preservation, the enjoyment, and the means of life, are left by Providence to be wrought out by the unaided powers of man, a species of knowledge which is not content with this slow and uncertain process of attainment must surely have some peculiar claim upon our interest and attention.

It will also be acknowledged, that the state of the world in general, when not influenced by the doctrines of the Gospel, has ever been such as to induce serious persons to desire a further disclosure of the will and intentions of God, as the only possible means of escape from the perplexities by which they have found themselves surrounded.

These notes, it should be remarked, are essential to a revelation, true or false, and quite irrespective of our estimate of the actual facts or doctrines which it professes to make known. But the admission, on whatever grounds, of the prospective importance of a revelation, leads at once to the presumption, that, when imparted, it would be in such a manner as to give it due weight with all, who, by a fulfilment of the required conditions, should have placed themselves in a position to profit by it. Thus we negative at once the possibility of a revelation, belief in which should be attained through the understanding alone, for that would exclude from its advantages, whatever they might be, by far the greater part of mankind, and that through no demerit of their own. But the utmost arrogance of intellect and learning could not conceive, that the God and Father of us all would provide for the ignorant and unlettered with a less tender care than for the most highly cultivated of their brethren.

II. But ignorance and dulness are not the only

disqualifications for a task of this magnitude and importance. When we reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of life, on our frail tenure of the mental powers, and on those unexpected vicissitudes by which all men are more or less liable to be withdrawn from the course of action they have chosen for themselves; we feel confident, that the acknowledgment or denial of the authenticity of the Divine message would not, even with men possessed of learning, genius, and leisure, be made a trial of intellectual acuteness and discrimination. This presumption is enhanced when we remember that assent to the truth of a religion is but the entrance on a new field of spiritual and moral action. The great end of religion in this world is to produce habits of thought and feeling corresponding to the truths which it proclaims. Such habits are of slow growth, and only to be matured by long continuance in well-doing. The obvious inference is, that the investigation of a professed revelation cannot rightly be so conducted as long to postpone the period of obedience to its dictates. It is manifest that, while the probation of the inquirer may at any moment be cut short, and while so many adverse influences, both from within and from without, conspire to hinder the free course of truth, the formation of the heart and mind upon the model which religion offers ought to commence in the most early period of our religious discipline. It

cannot be the will of God that it should be deferred to the conclusion of an extended and laborious inquiry, which leaves the mind exhausted, and the heart deadened, by a weary round of doubt and argument, of proof and counterproof.

III. It is also certain that any revelation of the nature or designs of a Being possessed of every great and good quality, within the range of our conceptions, and infinite in all His attributes, must contain matter above the understanding of mankind, not only to discern, but to comprehend. Some point there must be beyond which it is unable to advance; and this circumstance casts a shade of uncertainty, at least, on the propriety of its exclusive use in any stage between the first hearing and the full acceptance of the Word of God. At all events, the consideration now urged should induce the thoughtful inquirer to maintain an attitude of suspense, until he has ascertained, whether the professed revelation itself claims a right to circumscribe or regulate his intellectual activity.

IV. It may be urged, also, that, in the process leading to conviction, the same faculties would in all probability be employed, which the truth is designed to exercise and bring to perfection, when the conviction is complete. It seems reasonable to suppose that the life of man would, under the guidance of his Maker, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," be a continuous advance in one direction;

not first a trial of the intellect, and then a discipline of the affections. The kingdom of God within the soul is compared by our Lord to a "seed cast into the ground," which springs and grows up, and, without losing its identity, exhibits in due season, "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear¹." The religious life is one throughout in its essential character, though varying in outward show from seed to leaf, and from leaf to fruit, as it is gradually strengthened, refined, and dignified by accessions of grace and knowledge. If, then, we know the fruit, we know the seed from which it sprung. If the design of a revelation be to enforce the supremacy of the Divine will over the moral nature of mankind, it will address itself at once to that portion of our reasonable frame; and when it is under the necessity of appealing to the intellect, it will regard it principally as a means to further ends, and not as the ultimate or sole recipient of religious truth.

V. Our first impulse would certainly lead us to declare that there must be something wrong in the mere absence of a predisposition towards that which the event may prove to be a true word of God. Much more should we be disposed to condemn the attempt to regulate one's feelings towards a professed revelation on the presumption of its false-

¹ Mark iv. 26—28.

hood, until the evidence in its behalf has been examined and approved. We feel instinctively that an affront is put on truth, should the subject of investigation be true, when men deliberately exclude from their view whatever there may be that is awful and subduing, or lovely and persuasive, in its history, its teaching, or embodied presence. These qualities in true religion are indications of its origin, the stamp and impress of its Divine Author; voices from heaven, that, when uttered, may not remain unheard or disobeyed.

It is an axiom in natural theology, that whatever conduces to a beneficial end is purposely endowed with that tendency. The contrary supposition would be inconsistent with the attributes of a Being at once infinitely wise and infinitely good. But "all things are double one against another:" the kingdom of nature is in many things the earthly shadow of the kingdom of grace; the same Originating Mind operating in each by like laws, and developing itself in analogous results. In the investigation of the one, therefore, as well as of the other, we may presume the just application of that principle by which we infer the intention of Him from whom all things proceed from their acknowledged use. We conclude, then, that every circumstance in connexion with a revelation of God's will, which has any tendency, however little or remote, to recommend it to the faith of those for

whose benefit it is made, must have been a portion of its evidences in the fore-knowledge and design of its Omniscient Author. It will follow, that when it becomes our duty to employ or to estimate all the forces which can be set in array for the cause of Christian truth, we are not at liberty to have recourse or regard to those only which lie wholly within the province of the intellect, much less to those which are peculiar to one portion of it, as to the reasoning faculty; but, both in theory and practice, we must assign its proper place and relative importance to every tendency and motive that is calculated to increase the aggressive force of truth, that is efficacious to urge or to allure men onward towards the great end of their creation and existence.

VI. A system of attack on unbelief conducted on this principle, being in accordance with the provisions of the great Ruler of the world, might hope for success in His blessing and co-operation. On the other hand, we must anticipate the eventual failure of any course of action which is not guided by the apparent indications of His will and providence. If we would act as safe as well as a reverent part, we must learn to forbear, on the first appearance of a discrepancy between the method we propose to follow, and the observed ways of God, even though the precise evil to be feared is not at once discerned. Now, in the case before us,

it needs but very slight reflection to detect a symptom of contrariety. A natural feeling tells us that an actual revelation from our Maker must give law to the intellect, no less than to the affections, unless it expressly disclaim the exercise of such authority. It is, therefore, an unnatural and inverted process to begin by subjecting it to the scrutiny of the critical and logical faculties. It is evident, also, that from thus acting as if it were independent of, and superior to, that which is designed to control and regulate its operation, the intellect must in time become disqualified for its legitimate position of docility. In this manner a moral habit is contracted which can only be overcome by a strong effort of humility, and humility is the last perfected virtue of the Christian saint, and one which it were folly to assume in those who, from the nature of the case, are neither imbued with the principles of Christianity, nor under the influence of the Spirit of Christ.

VII. It is also frequently observed, that the habit of viewing the truths of religion, as a subject of thought and argument, rather than of faith, tends to produce a forgetfulness of their independent and objective existence. That which comes before men only at their own will, armed with no external authority, and bearing no relation to any thing but their own thoughts, seems in time to owe its being to themselves, and to be an efflux or development

of their own intellectual life. The incompatibility of this state of mind with any real belief in a Divine revelation would be sufficiently obvious even if it were not proved by the history of apostates in all ages. In fact, it has very often been found a step of easy descent, either to the open denial of an intelligent Creator, or to the more plausible system of Pantheism, which is but a disguised form of the same impiety.

VIII. On the other hand, a sincere belief in the personal existence of one Creator and Moral Governor of the universe, involves a proper sense of the claim which a revelation professing to proceed from Him must have upon the reverence of mankind.

As creatures of God, we are at His entire disposal. No circumstances can suspend the obligation of reverence and submission when once He has been heard to speak; nay, rather, we are bound to listen for His voice, to be ever in the attitude of the prophet "watching to see what the Lord will say unto us²." A disposition to scrutinise and dispute the Word of God is strangely out of place in those who are the work of His hands, and the helpless creatures of His daily bounty. But this consideration receives a great accession of force when we remember that we are not merely creatures before our Maker, but sinners in the presence of our Judge.

² Hab. ii. 1.

The only temper of mind that becomes those who are conscious of evil in themselves, in relation to the All-seeing and Almighty Enemy of sin, is a profound anxiety to know by what means His displeasure may be averted, and to use them with the best effect when known. Such was the disposition of those early converts of every age, rank, and sex, who are recorded to have shown their compunction and concern upon the first preaching of the Gospel by the immediate inquiry: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They proved the depth and earnest nature of the feelings thus expressed, by the readiness with which they adopted the course of conduct at once required of them, and the firmness with which they afterwards adhered to it. "They that gladly received the word of the Apostle were baptized," and, from that day, "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ³." The same degree of external evidence was vouchsafed to multitudes besides, but failed in its effect with them, because they had not the same inducement to accept the proffered remedy; namely, the testimony of their own hearts to its necessity and value. Unbelievers reject the Gospel because their habit of mind is not in accordance with its humiliating doctrines; or, in the language of Scripture, "the

³ Acts ii. 37—42.

Word preached does not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it ⁴.”

IX. If we now turn our thoughts from those who receive to Him who has vouchsafed a revelation of His will and nature, the inference which has been drawn from the foregoing considerations is urged upon us with still greater force. We feel that it is unsuitable to the majesty of God, that aught which proceeds from Him should wait for its authentication from the slow and laboured guesses of the human intellect, before it is permitted to have currency among the motives by which mankind are influenced. It is surely a thought less unworthy of God, to deem that His “Word is with power,” and that it hastens forward of itself to execute its mission, subject to no other restriction or impediment than the unchanging principles of His moral government. A natural cause works out its usual and ordained effect, wherever it finds the materials on which it has power to act ; and we might argue from analogy that, in the spiritual world, “a word proceeding out of the mouth of God,” would by the same law impress its own authority on all whose hearts were prepared for its reception, by a general endeavour to maintain a conscience void of offence, and by a subduing sense of personal unworthiness. This parallel between the facts of grace and nature

⁴ Heb. iv. 2.

is suggested to us by our Lord Himself. In the parable of the sower, the seed which fell upon good ground, the soil of an "honest and good heart," brought forth, without loss or failure, "some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty." "Now the parable is this, the seed is the Word of God ⁵."

X. It appears, then, that there is a certain moral habit, partly a readiness to believe, and partly reverence, which is necessary to all who prepare to investigate the authenticity of a professed revelation. Without it there can be neither a legitimate susceptibility of the force of Divine truth, nor any security against the unworthy treatment of what is possibly a word of God ⁶.

The principle appears to be reasonable enough; but, whatever be the cause, we are not so familiar with the expression of it as its importance certainly deserves. It is, therefore, satisfactory to find that it occupies its rightful position in the theology of early Christian writers. Perhaps the following sentences

⁵ Matt. xiii. 23 ; Luke viii. 11. 15.

⁶ Ex te quæro quid existimes in graviore culpâ esse, religionem tradere indigno, an, id quod ab eis qui illam tradunt dicitur, credere? Si quem dicam indignum non intelligis; eum dico, qui ficto pectore accedit. Concedis, ut arbitror, magis culpandum esse tali homini pandere si qua sunt sancta secreta, quam religiosus viris de ipsâ religione aliquid affirmantibus credere. Neque enim te aliud respondere decuerit.—*S. Aug. de Util. Cred.* § 23.

from Justin Martyr will enforce the remarks that have been made, as well as illustrate their object. "The word of truth is free and independent, and disdains to be subjected to a test, or to the scrutiny which attends the process of proof in the minds of the hearers. Its inherent dignity and reliance on Him who sent it demand our faith. . . . Coming as it does with authority, it is with reason disinclined to grant a demonstration of what it asserts; for such demonstration could not be any thing not already included in the truth itself. . . . God is the Truth, and His Son is the Word. . . . Wherefore they who follow Him will find repose in Him, and their faith serves them in the place of demonstration⁷."

It will be granted that, if the principles which have here been advocated are correct, they supply the Christian teacher with a practical conclusion of great utility in his intercourse with unbelievers. They justify him in expecting to find those, who have in some measure lived according to their knowledge, already predisposed to the reception of revealed truth, and reluctant, from an instinct of reverence, to join in that over-bold discussion of its

⁷ De Res. Carn. in ipso init.—Sim. Lactantius: "Nec enim decebat ut, cum Deus ad hominem loqueretur, argumentis assereret suas voces, tanquam aliter fides ei non haberetur: sed, ut oportuit, est locutus, quasi rerum omnium maximus iudex, cujus est non argumentari, sed pronuntiare."—L. iii. c. i.

credentials, which the many will forthwith begin to institute. On the other hand, they prepare him to trace a real, though perhaps unconscious, hostility to the truth itself, in the assumption of an unrestricted right to dispute and scrutinise. They lead him to infer, that those who, in the event, reject the word of God, only fail to recognise His voice, because their soul, through sin, is not in unison with His will; and that, in such cases, therefore, the profession of a candid inquiry is either the mere pretext of self-delusion, or the deliberate expedient of predetermined unbelief.

CHAPTER V.

THE considerations already advanced are sufficient to show that, if we were anticipating a revelation of the nature and will of God, we should have strong reason to conclude beforehand that the authenticity of the Divine announcement would be guaranteed by various and independent indications of its source and character, the force of which would be impressed on every portion of our rational being, according to the several capacities and properties of each.

We are not so much concerned to settle the scale of relative capacity; but it will be remembered that the drift of our reflections seemed to point to the higher affections of our nature, as the most congenial recipients of the Divine Word, provided they are under the due control and guidance of the moral faculty.

We have endeavoured to establish our principle by showing that it is in harmony with human nature in its present state, and with the relation of man to his Maker. Now it is possible that an opponent might be willing to admit the premises,

but at the same time attempt to evade or weaken the force of this concession, by suggesting that, in the conduct of a revelation which must itself be a violent departure from the ordinary course of Providence, it is not unreasonable to expect that extraordinary methods, and such as can receive no illustration from analogy, would be employed to convey to the mind and heart of man a practical knowledge of the truths which might be the subject of the Divine communication. To support this conjectural notion, an appeal might be made to a superstitious opinion still entertained by many ill-instructed Christians, which appears in a degree to embody the same principle. According to the erroneous view to which allusion is made, a sudden and extemporaneous exercise of feeling, attributed to the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, is conceived to enable the converted infidel, or the reclaimed profligate, not merely to assume on trust, with the complete assurance of enlightened faith, the abstract truth of Revelation, but even to dispense with all moral preparation, and every usual inducement to belief. We certainly should not be able to deny that the advocates of this opinion believe themselves to have discovered a theory of conviction, the principle of which could not have been derived from any observation of Providence or nature.

It would be superfluous to enter upon a discussion of the objection here supposed; because its false-

hood is necessarily implied in the truth of the proposition, which it is the object of the present chapter to establish. We therefore proceed at once to show, that the presumption raised in favour of the contrary principle is confirmed by the actual Revelation which has been vouchsafed ; or, in other words, that our acceptance of the Gospel involves the admission of certain doctrines which are at variance with all such special and partial modes of apprehending sacred truth.

I. The first reflections that occur are suggested by certain broad features which at once distinguish the religion of Christ from any merely hypothetical scheme of revelation.

(1.) It will be remembered, that some of the arguments which have been used are built on the assumption that if the process of conversion were not always chiefly, and sometimes wholly, of a moral nature, there would be few indeed whose worldly circumstances did not exclude them from a participation in the rewards of faith. Now, it is almost too obvious to be remarked, that the weight of such considerations is increased beyond expression, when we are made acquainted with the actual substance of the Christian Revelation. The wonderful truth, that the Son of God was incarnate to save us from eternal misery, is of such infinite moment to every child of man, that we cannot for an instant entertain the least doubt of its being the will of

God that all such inducements to belief should be employed as would be most likely to insure its reception by all of every class, who, from their state of moral advancement, might be found in a condition to profit by it. Our natural feelings revolt at the bare thought of its rejection being left possible from mere defects in the argumentative proof, from want of leisure to study, or of ability to understand it. Mere intellectual failure and providential disqualification are not the fit subjects of penal retribution. It does not seem possible to conceive otherwise of God's government of His creatures, without incurring the condemnation of those who "think wickedly that He is even such an one as themselves." It was the Pharisee, the constant object of our Lord's rebuke and indignation, who gave utterance to the profane and cruel sentiment: "this people who knoweth not the law are cursed ¹."

(2.) We are led to a similar conclusion by the fact that some of the doctrines of the Gospel are professedly above the understanding of mankind. In other words, the mystery in which they are involved appears to relegate them to the jurisdiction of another tribunal. The Gospel demands faith as the condition of knowledge, and even then defers the full disclosure of the truth until its rejec-

¹ John vii. 49.

tion is no longer possible. “*Now* we see through a glass darkly, but *then* face to face: *now* we know in part, but *then* shall we know even as also we are known².”

(3.) Akin to this peculiarity of the Christian dispensation, and confirmatory of the same principle, is the fact, so often noticed by writers of every class, that “throughout the Sacred Writings there is a remarkable absence of all endeavour to avoid, or meet, or satisfy objections³.”

(4.) This resolute disregard, if I may so speak, of the pretensions of the intellect, is further confirmed and illustrated by the dogmatic unity which pervades the whole system of revealed religion. A doctrine which is understood, or, from our familiarity with it, is supposed to be understood, is found to be inseparably connected with another, and through that with others also, so that the reception of the first, by logical necessity, involves the acknowledgment of all. Thus the faith stands pledged to much more than has undergone a critical survey. The thinking powers are employed to trace the essential connexion between truth and truth, and then their exercise becomes superfluous. If there be a ready faith, this dispensation brings with it

² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

³ Sumner's Records of the Creation,—Conclusion, Sect. II.

this advantage, that when one doctrine is sincerely embraced, it supplies a certain degree of evidence in favour of all that are bound up with it. But the very same intellectual process brings doubt and difficulty to those who are not imbued with a believing temper; for they are tempted to reject the very truths with which they set out, when at length they discover them to involve conclusions distasteful to their pride of intellect.

(5.) It should be observed, also, as one of many facts converging to the same point, that the Gospel demands but a small degree of mental exertion, when it imparts its necessary and most important truths. They are known as the subject of direct revelation, and not as the result of ambitious speculation, or the reward of labour and research. Genius and learning may be well employed in their defence and illustration, but must be wholly unconcerned in their discovery. Indefinite investigation is precluded, because the nature of its object is defined and limited. "One fixed body of doctrine," says Tertullian, "has been taught by Christ, which the world is bound by all means to believe; and to seek for that very reason, that, when it shall have found, it may believe. But the search after a body of doctrine that is one and fixed, cannot be without limit. You must seek till you have found, and believe when you have found. Nothing more

is needed, then, except that you keep what you have believed⁴." Here, then, is another instance of that secondary position which is occupied by the intellect in its relation to revealed truth, and one which tends to disparage its paramount claims in every other stage of religious progress and conviction.

(6.) Another consideration of the same nature is, the union of simplicity with mystery in the prescribed worship of the Christian⁵. As an employment of our active faculties, it does not involve the exercise of any but the most ordinary powers; but if we quit the duty in order to theorize upon its nature, we are immediately beset with difficulties.

⁴ De Præscript. c. ix.

⁵ "Quædam pauca eademque factu facillima, et intellectu angustissima et observatione castissima, Dominus et Apostolica tradidit disciplina, sicuti est baptismi sacramentum, et celebratio corporis et sanguinis Domini."—S. Aug. de Doct. Chr. iii. 9. It was early observed that unbelievers were rather repelled than attracted (like Naaman, when told to "wash and be clean," 2 Kings v. 11,) by the promise of results so great from the use of such simple means. "Nihil adeo est quod obduret mentes hominum, quam simplicitas divinorum operum quæ in actu videtur, et magnificentia quæ in effectu repromittitur: ut hic quoque (sc. in Baptismo), quoniam tanta simplicitate, sine pompa, sine apparatu novo aliquo, denique sine sumptu, homo in aqua demissus et inter pauca verba tinctus, non multo vel nihilo mundior resurgit, eo incredibilis existimetur consecutio æternitatis. . . . Pro misera incredulitas, quæ denegas Deo proprietates suas, simplicitatem et potestatem."—Tertull. De Baptismo, c. ii.

Praise and thanksgiving, confession and prayer, the examination of conscience, the use of sacraments, and other means of grace, involve a mystery, the complete solution of which evades the penetration of the most practised reasoner. Why should it be necessary to ask of Him who knows our wants before we utter them? Why tell our sins to Him who was the witness of them? Or how, it may be asked, can our prayer produce any change of will in Him who is unchangeable? Such questions bring a real difficulty to those who are reluctant to obey before they understand; for it must be confessed that the efficacy of prayer and of the Sacraments is in this life subject to the cognisance of faith alone. We can, however, have assurance of their value, despite the absence of an intellectual proof. The humble and obedient, be they wise or simple, learned or unlearned, receive in those gifts of God, of which these means are a condition, an evidence of their acceptance with Him far more powerful and constraining than could ever be afforded by the most lucid apprehension of its grounds.

(7.) It cannot be said that it is in any sense the office of the Christian religion to promote directly the development of the intellectual powers; for its true end is the salvation of man by the purification of his moral nature. It is, indeed, a common observation, that the sincere convert appears to have acquired, together with the knowledge of religion,

an enlarged capacity of understanding; but this is only a collateral result, not an immediate object of the communication of the truth. It must be ascribed, in part, to his being enfranchised by the grace of Christ from sensuality and vanity, and so enabled to engage in the pursuit of knowledge without distraction; and, partly, to the absorbing interest which he finds in the fresh fields of thought that open to his view and stimulate him to a more intense and more sustained exertion of his powers.

(8.) The considerations hitherto adduced amount perhaps to little more than a tacit disallowance of the supremacy of the understanding in questions of religion. But the Holy Scriptures repudiate its high pretensions far more strongly than has yet appeared. Indeed, a religion which taught the deep corruption of our nature and the blinding influence of sin, could not, without self-contradiction, submit its teaching or its evidence to the sole judgment of the unsanctified mind. If the Gospel be true and from God, it is not possible that it should so betray itself. Accordingly it proclaims as a first principle of religion that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" it appoints the mode in which its authenticity must be decided, determines the criterion of its own truth, and foretells its own rejection by those who presumptu-

ously adopt a different test. This principle is so conspicuous a feature in the teaching of the Scriptures, that it has frequently attracted the contemptuous notice of the unbeliever, and yet it is, in fact, only an instance of consistency, and a necessary mark of truth. With the Christian, however, we should proceed to argue that, assuming the Gospel to be from God indeed, the conditions of belief and knowledge on which it insists cannot be set aside without incurring guilt and loss. To refuse to apply the only criterion, which is by itself admitted to be applicable, is to presume its falsehood; and thus to prejudge the question, is, in fact, to throw off the character of an inquirer after truth.

(9.) But the inspired Word proceeds even to the direct depreciation of intellectual qualities. It not only denies them the special office of a guide to Christ, but announces a preference for the slenderly endowed and uncultivated mind. Witness our Lord's own solemn words: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes⁶." The experience of the Apostles attests the permanence and the universality of this law. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the

⁶ Matt. xi. 25.

flesh are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise⁷."

Nor can it be denied that, in the Christian Scriptures, the high cultivation of the mind is represented as being in some manner a positive disqualification for the attainment of Divine knowledge. We are not only told of those who, "professing themselves to be wise, became fools⁸;" but are expressly taught that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and warned to lay it aside when we approach the sacred subject of religion. "For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness⁹." It would of course be false to say that the learned, the intellectual, and the highly polished, are necessarily led to irreligion and unbelief; but it is beyond dispute, that the possession of those qualities, however valuable in some respects, has been found to involve strong temptations to indifference and scepticism. The modes are manifold in which, when not accompanied by moral safeguards, they operate to the production of this miserable result. Very frequently their possessor is tempted to regard them as a meritorious distinction by which he is exalted above the less favoured of mankind, and thus the pride of intellect induces

⁷ 1 Cor. i. 26.

⁸ Rom. i. 22.

⁹ 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19; Comp. c. i. 18—31.

a fatal injury to the whole moral frame. Sometimes the habit of exercising the logical faculty on every thing presented to it causes the unconscious intrusion of a critical and speculative spirit into the most sacred and professedly mysterious subjects. Some thoughtful persons are led into perplexities that are injurious to faith, by the almost unconscious facility with which their minds frame subtle distinctions, and, by that means, create imaginary discrepancies. Many fall into error through a habit of generalization, which produces a syncretic turn of mind, and leads them to class all religions together, as if they differed only in their human additions, and were equally entitled to respect on account of the fragments of truth which are undoubtedly contained in all. In short, the unsanctified heart can have no more powerful ally in its resistance to the force of truth, than a mind conversant with a high range of thought and well armed with dialectic skill.

II. In the preceding observations, which have been suggested by a few obvious and general characteristics of the Christian religion, we have a certain weight of scriptural authority in favour of the principle which it is our object to enforce; namely, that the intellect, as compared with the affections, and especially if distinguished from the imaginative faculty, has only a subordinate relation to the real evidences of the Gospel. A brief con-

sideration of some of the dogmatic statements of Holy Scripture will render the justice of this conclusion yet more apparent.

(1.) Let us take for example the ascription of unbounded power to the Creator of the Universe. This appears to be one of the more simple of the attributes of God, both because it implies precisely the same relation to every creature, animate or inanimate, and because the notion of power is by necessary experience familiar to all, and is besides a subject of purely intellectual, not of moral, apprehension. At the same time, a power capable of infinite results takes us at once not only beyond the range of experience, but above the utmost reach of imagination. A finite mind cannot embrace and comprehend an infinite idea. There is a point, then, it appears, at which the office of the mind must cease; but then, in aid of the intellectual image which is of necessity imperfect, we have the affections of awe and wonder, and by their assistance we are enabled to arrive at a less inadequate conception of Almighty power.

The goodness of God, as being infinite, is equally beyond the comprehension of mankind, and moreover is attended by a source of difficulty peculiar to itself. The attribute of goodness is subjectively more than a bare notion. It is not satisfied with intellectual conception. There is that in it which is as little the object of the thinking principle, as

colours are of the sense of hearing; or sound, of sight. Its image on the soul may therefore remain not merely faint, but incomplete, though its effects are seen and confessed and made the theme of meditation. Love is the faculty by which the goodness of God is conveyed home to the soul of man; and the more purely He is loved, the more deeply will the correlative impression be graven on the soul.

I class the attributes of God among the doctrines of the Gospel, because we are indebted to Christianity for that authoritative declaration of His nature, without which, as experience has proved, opinion and belief could not have risen to assurance. Very few of the best ancient philosophers appear to have possessed such correct notions of the Deity as might have been derived from natural religion; while from the multitude all true knowledge was concealed beneath a mass of fabulous impiety. The observation holds good of the corresponding classes, the learned and unlearned, in heathen nations, at the present day; and when we turn to modern infidelity in Christian lands, we frequently find the doctrine of the Divine attributes subverted in its foundation by a denial of the personal existence of the Deity.

The corruption of human nature is another truth that was always deducible from observation, but obtained no general acceptance until it was pub-

lished as an article of the Christian faith. But here, in bringing assurance to the humble believer, revelation has created a difficulty for the self-sufficient. This corruption is represented as inherited, as transmitted from parent to child: a fact, the manner of which is far beyond the reach of the most intelligent research. The simple notion of a general corruption of morals when incorporated with the Christian doctrine of original sin, ceases to have an adequate expression in the thoughts or words of men. But the Gospel in revealing more, as needful to the believer, does not require that it should be understood. The doctrine addresses itself to a certain moral disposition, the exercise of which is no less worthy of a reasonable being, than would be the intellectual apprehension of that which calls it into action. Humility and fear, as of an impure soul before the Holy and Almighty God, are the suitable acknowledgment of the inborn pollution of the soul, and subjectively complete our knowledge and acceptance of the doctrine.

(2.) The principle to which we have been led, has been briefly expressed in the old apophthegm; "*Mores perducunt ad intelligentiam* ¹." With this formula for our guide, it would be no less easy than instructive to trace the progress of an enlightened faith through the whole range of Christian doctrine,

¹ S. Aug. Tract. XVIII. in Joh. Ev. § 7.

and to observe how the moral basis of belief and knowledge reveals itself at every stage of progress. It will also be useful to our present purpose if we follow the clue for a short way.

The ordinary believer in a Christian country admits an article of faith into his system, either upon authority alone, or as the result of personal experience thrown into definite form by the assistance, perhaps unacknowledged, of authority. To receive a dogma upon trust, that is, to believe it on authority alone, implies a submission of the mind by a real effort of will, or at least a willingness to submit, should there be aught in the communication which is not its own evidence and warrant. Here, then, is a moral qualification always; and, sometimes, an active moral process. In the other case, when the truth is gradually learnt in different stages, as it were, of our religious probation, the moral character of conviction is even yet more evident. We strive to do good, for example; the attempt does but disclose our weakness. We struggle against temptation, and thus become acquainted with the powerful influence of evil in our soul. The man who has had this experience of himself will never refuse to believe in the inherent sinfulness of his nature, and his consequent need of sanctifying grace. Rather he will thankfully and eagerly accept the revealed solution of his difficulties, if it be only brought before him with becoming

earnestness. He has already learnt as much from his own heart, and the Christian doctrine is but the authorized expression of an idea which has become familiar. Moreover he has been brought into that disposition of mind, to which the offer of salvation is especially addressed. He “labours and is heavy laden²” with the burden of his sins, and catches eagerly at any plausible appearance of deliverance and rest. He cannot expect to receive this blessing from the hands of men; for he has found all suffering the same evil as himself, polluted by the same sins, encompassed by the same infirmities, afflicted by the same wants, and, when not too wretched to be conscious of their wretchedness, seeking, like himself, for a Redeemer. Thus predisposed, he welcomes the assurance, proceeding from adequate authority, that God has provided for his restoration; that a Deliverer has been sent who is both God and man; man to sympathise with human feelings, God to redeem and rescue. He is now prepared to accept with joy the doctrine of the Sacraments, the means appointed for his union to this Saviour, so full of mercy and of power. He finds in them much that would preclude belief, if he were forbidden to believe before he understood; but he is willing still to take the truth on trust, and, after he has done so, experience of their mys-

² Matt. xi. 28.

terious efficacy soon places him above the necessity of any formal proof. He has tasted, and sees that the Lord is gracious. Living thenceforward on the bounty of God, he is content to waive all subtle questions respecting the channel through which it flows. Indeed he feels it overbold to ask them, unless providentially incited to the inquiry. He murmurs not at being able to learn so little; is rather thankful that he is told so much. Knowing all that he need know for growth in grace, he even fears that the pursuit of more might be a subtle vanity, and its result unprofitable. He has found Him whom he sought, and for the future, his sole duty is to worship and to be still.

(3.) It should be remembered that the doctrines of which mention has been made, and many others peculiar to the Gospel, have nothing to recommend them to men in an ordinary moral state. On the contrary, they contain matter of deep offence to proud and worldly minds. The record of their first promulgation is full of evidence to that effect; to which we may refer for illustration, though it is not needed to confirm a fact so obvious. Thus the hostility of the natural man to the imputation of personal sinfulness is shown in that angry question of the Pharisees, “Are we blind also³?” The repulsiveness of doctrines which are above the human

³ John ix. 40.

understanding is evinced by the indignation of the Jews when they were led to think that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God by a peculiar and real sonship⁴; by the doubts of Nicodemus respecting the new birth of water and the Spirit⁵; and by the conduct of those disciples, who on His anticipatory allusions to the other Sacrament “went back, and walked no more with Him⁶.” The humiliating circumstances of the death of Christ proved, as it was reasonable to expect, “unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness⁷.” In short, the doctrines of the Gospel are such as to irritate the unsanctified mind. Hence obstacles are created which must be removed by the application of a countervailing influence. But it is evident, that no speculative answer can meet such difficulties, because their root is not in the intellectual but in the moral nature. The Gospel, therefore, does not attempt to meet them by an immediate reply, but declares obedience to be the condition of assurance, and wins an entrance into the heart by other weapons, and of a finer temper.

III. We have now considered a small portion of the testimony, direct and indirect, which is borne by Christianity itself, to the inexpediency and danger of a merely intellectual method of persua-

⁴ John v. 18.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 4.

⁶ Ibid. vi. 66.

⁷ 1 Cor. i. 23.

sion in our intercourse with those who are ignorant of, or hostile to, revealed truth. In former chapters, the same conclusion was inferred from the natural incapacity of the unaided intellect, or from the necessary conditions of a revelation. Our view of the subject will be incomplete until we have before us all that the Scriptures teach concerning the direct source of spiritual knowledge, and the divinely appointed medium of practical conviction. To this task we shall address ourselves in some following chapters, and, this accomplished, it will remain only to inquire in what manner our inspired teachers applied, in their own practice, the principles which we derive from their instructions.

In the mean time, it may be expedient to add a few words upon an opinion sometimes expressed by avowed enemies of the Gospel, which recognises the truth of the premises on which a portion of this argument is based. They not unfrequently attribute the rapid and wide extension of Christianity to its wonderful adaptation to the wants and instincts of the common nature of mankind^s. This circum-

^s E. g. "Minds afflicted by calamity and the contempt of mankind, cheerfully listen to the Divine promise of future happiness; while, on the contrary, the fortunate are satisfied with the possession of this world; and the wise abuse in doubt and dispute their vain superiority of reason and knowledge."—*Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, c. xv. This is supposed to account, in part, for the rapid diffusion of Christianity among the poor and un-

stance has been acknowledged by some modern infidels as an excellence deserving of the highest commendation, and even gratitude, at the very time that they have been engaged in an attempt to supersede it by a system more suited, as they conceive, to the present condition of the world, and more conducive to the future progress of society. There have been others who, misled by their overweening estimate of the dignity and power of the intellect, have viewed its condescension to what they imagine the lower interests of our mixed nature, as a serious presumption against its authenticity and truth. But whatever use has been made of the opinion, its existence among unbelievers is of some value to ourselves. We find, then, that they ascribe the reception of the Christian faith more to the affections than to the understanding of

learned, who always form the great bulk of mankind. Some have gone so far as to ascribe even the *invention* of the Christian faith to the personal feelings of its first professors. In this manner Strauss has attempted to explain its origin. "The deep distress, bodily and mental, of the time—caused these persons to think of the wrongful sufferings of Jesus by the hands of the envious rulers and Pharisees, with the energy of individual application to themselves: while the thought of His resurrection, (a fancied resurrection from the grave!) comforted them with a hope in themselves of similar support and eventual triumph. Hence the belief in the vicarious sufferings,—the meritorious sacrifice,—the conquest over the grave,—the glorification and eternal reign,—of their Lord and Redeemer."—*Mill on the Pantheistic Theory*, § v. p. 85.

mankind. They tell us that men have been driven by the misery of their condition to seek peace and comfort from the Gospel; that they have forsaken their former idols of sense and imagination, because experience proved that there was no help in them; and have enrolled themselves the soldiers and disciples of Christ, because the rest for which they longed was promised them in Him. Such are the admissions, or the representations, of the scorner; but to this acknowledgment the faithful Christian will desire to add, that those who flee to Christ for refuge, find in Him indeed the fulfilment of all their hopes, and all their aspirations. The Creator of the world can alone be its Redeemer. He who made man, and therefore knows what is in man, can alone speak peace to the disturbed sin-wearied soul.

“God made man for Himself, and our heart is uneasy till it repose on Him⁹.” These words expressed the experience of S. Augustine, when, after long wavering, he had forsaken the errors of his Manichean youth, and humbled himself to receive the new birth in Christ. What he had been before the blessed termination of his wanderings, all men must be who live as he had lived, “without God in the world;” restless, because unsatisfied; ever abused by phantoms, yet ever cherishing fallacious

⁹ Conf. i. 1.

hopes, and grasping, with a desperate credulity, at the delusive promises and shows of earth; forgetful of their high origin, unconscious of their higher destiny, boastful of a liberty which is the worst form of slavery, and thinking scorn of the obedience which alone can make them free.

“God only can live without rule and be happy¹.” Man, seeking the liberty of God, fell from his own, —and from happiness. The Gospel offers to renew them both on the condition of a renewed obedience. And if the offer is accepted, as the Christian proceeds in his career, that old waywardness of heart gives place to reverent docility; his aspirations to the forfeited inheritance of man are hallowed into an enlightened hope, while they are chastened by humility and awe, and satisfied in part by present peace; his capacity for things spiritual advances with holy practice; and, with enlarged capacity to understand and know, springs up a deeper peace, and more stedfast reliance upon the truth that maketh free; and thus, at length, experience has superseded evidence, and pronounced its unerring comment on the Divine word of promise: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant².”

¹ S. Aug. de Gen. c. Man. i. 15.

² Ps. xxv. 14.

CHAPTER VI.

THE considerations adduced in the preceding chapters appear to furnish ample grounds for the conclusion, that the practical and real reception of religious truth is, in all cases, the result of influences, which act upon the moral frame, and give force and effect to that species of evidence which is addressed to the perceptive and reasoning powers. In other words, it has been shown, that a merely intellectual proof, however perfect in itself, is essentially insufficient to create that state of permanent conviction which, in theology, is termed a *living faith*; and that, in point of fact, the Divine Author of Revelation, in all His intercourse with man, has acted, as it were, in recognition of this principle, and had regard to the more recondite, as well as to the more obvious and superficial, elements of human nature. To some of these deep-seated and influential springs of motive we have already had occasion to allude with more or less distinctness; as, for example, to the unconquerable discontent of the more pure and elevated portion of

mankind with all that is possessed and present; their sympathy with sentiments and assent to principles above their own range of practice and habitual feeling; their strong though indefinite aspirations towards an imagined region of unearthly bliss; which are all undeniably the gift and work of God no less than is the intellect itself, and all furnish evidence of an affinity between the soul and some unknown object of its affections, from the perception and fruition of which it is now cut off by the interposing barrier of sin.

The principles maintained have been already verified by an appeal to the acknowledged attributes of human nature. As yet, however, only indirect arguments have been drawn from the Holy Scriptures, the ultimate authority in every question of this kind. It therefore becomes necessary, to the complete pursuance of our design, that we should inquire into the teaching of Revelation itself respecting the nature of man, and his relations to the Spirit of God; inasmuch as these are the foundation, and, therefore, must be the rule, of all intercourse between the Divine mind and the human.

In explaining those doctrinal statements of Holy Scripture which do not admit of much illustration from other portions of the sacred text, we naturally have recourse to those writers who are allowed to represent the Church yet fresh from the teaching, and still imbued, in no small measure, with the

spirit, of the Apostles. This was the method adopted by Bishop Bull in his Discourse upon "The State of Man before the Fall," which is the subject next demanding our attention; nor does it appear that we could now pursue a wiser course, or conform to an example of more deserved authority. But here it should be distinctly understood, that the opinion of an individual member of the Church in early times is not, as such, supposed to have a greater weight than that of a devout and learned Christian of the present day. While we admit the great advantage possessed by the former in living nearer to the source of truth, we must not forget, nor undervalue, that which results from the greater extent and greater accuracy of modern learning. It is the *joint and concordant* testimony of early writers, especially of those who were the recognised teachers of the Church, to which we attribute weight in questions affecting doctrine. The opinion of one is only valuable when it can be presumed to be in accordance with the belief of all. But when we find that the great body of those whose works remain to us speak the same language upon a given doctrine, we believe their common sentiment to be an expression of the "mind of Christ," and a genuine portion of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints¹." It will be manifest

¹ Jude 3.

from this, that the statements of a writer who, without deserving to be branded as a heretic, is yet known to have shown a disposition to break away, wherever he could, from the received opinions of his day, are of no value whatever *in themselves* : they cannot be accepted as the voice of the Church, “the pillar and ground of the truth².” But at the same time it must be observed that, when authors of this character are found to share the general belief with respect to a doctrine which was neither expressed in the Creeds, nor otherwise affirmed by the public voice of the whole Church, upon which, therefore, we have no single authoritative expression of her deliberate judgment, the fact of their assent to the view taken by their brethren is even of more value to us than their individual testimonies would have been if their cotemporaries had allowed them to be men of strict and uniform orthodoxy. The adhesion of such writers to the common opinion enables us to argue that the doctrine in question must, in their time, have been considered logically essential to the completeness of the faith, and its acceptance the strict duty of a Christian ; and gives us reason to think that, if it had become the subject of controversy, it would, if deemed of sufficient importance, have received the authoritative sanction of the universal

² 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Church. Thus, if the bold and speculative Origen did not feel himself able to discuss one point with the same freedom that he displayed on others, there is a strong presumption that the received view upon that point was inseparably bound up with the whole system of Catholic doctrine, and that to have thought differently would, either directly or indirectly, have involved a greater departure from the doctrine held by all than even he desired to contemplate. We shall not omit, therefore, or, rather, we shall studiously record, the testimony of such writers when it is found in harmony with the teaching of the Church at large.

In estimating the value of ancient testimony, we should also bear in mind that it was not the habit of the Fathers to treat a doctrine systematically, until it had been perverted or denied by some and therefore required to be defended or explained. Before such hostile influence began to have effect, a doctrinal truth was seldom professedly unfolded in all its parts; but we find those parts appear and re-appear severally throughout their writings in every variety of manner and form of expression, in incidental mention, in allusion, in direct or indirect statement, or by implication. Now it should be observed, that the fact of these details of doctrine uniting to form one compact and consistent whole, furnishes a very strong argument in favour of each several part, and, consequently, of that larger

scheme of truth to which they all belong. Owing to their mutual connexion, a testimony to one part is a testimony to every other, and to the whole. It will be remembered, therefore, that the single truth at any time under consideration receives confirmation from all those connected truths which have already passed in review before us, and will be equally sustained by other partial truths which may afterwards be shown to be doctrinally implied in it.

The question now to be considered relates to the meaning of that statement respecting the moral and spiritual nature assigned to Adam at his creation, which it has pleased his Maker to put on record in the first page of inspired history.

I. To adopt the language of our great Hooker, "The works and operations of God have Him both for their worker and for the law whereby they are wrought. The being of God is a kind of law to His working; for that perfection which God is giveth perfection to that He doth³." Now it is manifest that the greater the excellence of any creature, the more largely must it share in the perfections of its Maker, the more deeply must it receive the impress and signature of the Divine cha-

³ Eccl. Pol. B. I. c. ii. § 2. Ed. Keble. Ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὧν πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ. Plat. Tim. Ast. vol. v. p. 138.

racter. We marvel not, therefore, when we are told that man, the most excellent inhabitant of the material world, and made but a little lower than the angels, was formed to bear, in an especial manner and degree, a resemblance to that Perfection which was the law of his creation⁴.

“God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him⁵.” The image of God is an expression which at once carries our thoughts forward to a supplemental truth revealed in the New Testament. On more than one occasion our blessed Lord declared: “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father⁶,” and the Apostle furnishes an inspired comment on His text, when he commends to our belief that doctrine of transcendent mystery;—that He is “in the form of God⁷,” that He is “the express image of the Divine substance⁸,” “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature⁹.”

We learn, then, from an authority which cannot err, and which here speaks too plainly to be misunderstood, that man was created in the image of God, and that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus

⁴ Καλὸν δὲ πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν τύχη πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαθὸν οἰκείως ἔχον· κ.τ.λ. Greg. Nyss. De Hom. Opif. c. xii., where he is evidently paraphrasing Plato, u. s. p. 136.

⁵ Gen. i. 27.

⁶ John xiv. 9; xii. 45.

⁷ Phil. ii. 6.

⁸ Heb. i. 3.

⁹ Col. i. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 4; comp. Rev. iii. 14.

Christ, is the express image and similitude of God. Connecting these truths, we arrive at the conclusion, that man was created with a resemblance, in the highest part of his nature, to the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity.

This inference is sanctioned by the teaching of St. John, in the first chapter of his Gospel, where he employs language which might lead to the ulterior conclusion, that this resemblance was impressed upon the soul of man at his creation by a direct communication of the Son Himself. For that Divine Person is described by the Apostle as "the Word, or Reason, in whom was life, which life was the light of man;" and as "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world¹;" from which expressions it has been inferred by ancient writers that the capacity of spiritual and moral wisdom is the effect of conformity to Him as the archetype, and participation of Him as the source of human reason.

The original resemblance of man to the Divine Word may also be inferred from a comparison of different statements in Holy Scriptures respecting the design of God in sending His Son into the world. The object proposed in the eternal counsels of the Almighty is variously described, as "the transformation of man by the renewing of his

¹ John i. 4. 9.

mind²,” and as the production, in the elect, of a “conformity to the image of His Son³.” The conclusion is obvious. If to restore man to his pristine state, and to create in him a resemblance to the Son of God, be one and the same thing, it follows that our nature was, in its original constitution, conformed to His Divine nature, in some, at least, of those particulars wherein, by Adam’s fall, we have suffered forfeiture.

II. In accordance with the interpretation which has been here given to the Sacred Text, we find Justin Martyr, whose life bordered closely on the apostolic age, explaining to the heathen, for whom he wrote, that He, from whom the Christians received their designation, is the “Word, or Reason, of whom the whole human race are partakers⁴.” Tertullian, referring to the scriptural account of the creation, speaks of the faculties of the rational soul as an image of the corresponding attributes of God, from whom he represents them to be derived *through* Him who is the Reason of the Father. At the same time he teaches, somewhat abstrusely, that Adam was created in the image of Christ by a prospective reference to what the Son should become in the economy of our redemption, thus making Him the archetype and model of the whole

² Rom. xii. 2 ; Eph. iv. 23 ; Tit. iii. 5.

³ Rom. viii. 29 ; 1 Cor. xv. 49 ; 2 Cor. iii. 18 ; John i. 12.

⁴ Ap. i. c. 46 ; comp. Ap. ii. cc. 8, 10, 13.

man⁵. S. Irenæus taught more simply, but to the same effect as far as our position is concerned, that the first man was created in the image of the invisible Word, the same Divine Person, who in the fulness of time becoming flesh, afforded a visible display of that perfect model upon which our nature

⁵ Imago minor veritate et afflatus (vid. Gen. ii. 7.) Spiritu inferior, habens illas utique lineas Dei qua immortalis anima, qua libera et sui arbitrii, qua præscia plerumque, qua rationalis, capax intellectus et scientiæ. Adv. Marc. l. ii. c. 9, comp. Adv. Prax. c. v. He supposes, with some others, that there is a distinction between the *image* and the *likeness* in Gen. i. 27. Imago in effigie, similitudo in æternitate. De Bapt. c. v. Vult enim (scil. Deus) imaginem suam nos etiam similitudinem fieri, ut simus sancti, sicut et Ipse sanctus est. Exhort. ad Cast. c. 1. The following is his own statement of the singular opinion mentioned in the text: Quodcunque enim limus exprimebatur, Christus cogitabatur homo futurus, quod et limus, et Sermo caro, quod et terra tunc. . . . *Et fecit hominem Deus*, id utique quod finxit, *ad imaginem Dei fecit illum*, scilicet Christi. . . . Ita limus ille, jam tunc imaginem induens Christi futuri in carne, non tantum Dei opus erat sed et pignus. De Res. Carn. c. vi. Comp. Adv. Marc. l. v. c. 8. Adv. Prax. c. xii. De Pudic. c. xvi. It is as if the form which the Son was to assume in time had been *first* determined (so to speak) in the counsels of God and Adam *afterwards* created in conformity with this *idée*. In this he goes beyond the reverent caution of the Church; but his opinion may be cited as a testimony to the general belief in that doctrine which it exaggerates. The notion was not, however, peculiar to Tertullian; *e. g.* it coincides, in part at least, with that imputed by S. Epiphanius to certain of the school of Origen: "suspiciantur corpus quod Filius Dei *habiturus esset* ex Mariâ ipsam esse imaginem," &c. Ep. ad Joh. Episc. Hieros. Ed. Par. 1622, vol. ii. p. 316. Inter Opp. Hieron. Ed. Rom. 1565, vol. ii. p. 112.

had been formed⁶. In the same manner Origen frequently identifies the Divine image after which man was created with the eternal Son of God. Thus, very expressly, he demands: "What else is that image of God, in the likeness of which man was made, than our Saviour, who is the first-born of every creature⁷?" The same author, commenting on the use of the definite article before the word *Λόγος*, when that title is given to Christ in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, infers that the Evangelist spoke not of *reason* as it exists in individuals, but of that universal Reason which is "the source of reason in every reasonable creature⁸." To the same purpose he explains, that "the life" declared by St. John to be "the light of men," is "not that life which is common to rational and irrational beings, but that which is superadded to the word, (or reason,) completed in us by a *participation* of the original Word⁹." He also teaches that "the Word who is with God, is the archetypal image from which other images are derived¹." The following is the testimony of Clemens of Alexandria to the same doctrine: "The image of God is His Word, and the true Son of the Divine Intelligence is the

⁶ L. v. c. 16; comp. c. 6, Feuard.

⁷ In Gen. i. 27; comp. c. Cels. l. vi. Ed. Spenc. p. 319.

⁸ In John i. 1, tom. ii.

⁹ Ibid. i. 4, tom. iii.; comp. de Princ. l. i. c. iii.

¹ In John i. 1, t. ii.

Word of God, the archetypal light of light; but the image of the Word is man. The true mind in man is that which is after the image, and is, therefore, said to have been made after the similitude of God, which is assimilated to the Divine Word by wisdom implanted in the heart, and by partaking of that wisdom has become rational²." This passage by itself might seem obscure, or doubtful in its reference to Christ; but in the same treatise he has expressly identified the Word of which he speaks with "the Word" of the first chapter of St. John, the Saviour of mankind³. Similar statements occur frequently in the writings of S. Athanasius. Thus, in his treatise on the Incarnation: "God made man after His own image, making him, also, partaker of the power of His own Word, that, having, as it were, certain shadows of the Word, and thereby becoming rational, he might be able to retain his blessedness⁴." By "the Word," or "the Reason," in this sentence, this author also clearly understands the Son of God, for in the same tract we find the following statement: "God in His goodness makes men to partake of our Lord Jesus Christ, His own image, and creates them after His own image and similitude⁵." And elsewhere in his works he teaches, to the same effect, that "our reason is the image of the Son of God, who is

² Adm. ad Gent. Ed. Sylb. 1688, p. 62. ³ *E.g.* pp. 68. 74.

⁴ Opp. vol. i. p. 56. Ed. Col. 1686.

⁵ p. 63.

Reason⁶.” The chain of testimony is lengthened by S. Hilary, in his exposition of the 119th Psalm : “Man is made after the image of God, not made the image of God ; for the image of God is the First-born of every creature⁷.” The words of S. Ambrose on the same Psalm are very similar : “Man is not the image of God, but was made after the likeness of God. Another is the image of the invisible God, namely, the First-born of every creature, by whom all things were made⁸.” The inference is inevitable that, in the opinion of these two Fathers, the first man was made at his creation like unto the Son of God ; and this, indeed, is expressly stated by the latter of them in his treatise on the Six Days of Creation, when he is explaining the formation of man in the similitude of God. For there, after referring, as in the passage just quoted, to Col. i. 15, he thus proceeds : “He is the image of God the Father who is alway and was in the beginning ; He, in short, is the image, who saith to Philip, He that seeth Me, seeth My Father also⁹.” S. Basil, in the Greek Church, under the form of a general principle, thus adds his testimony to the cotemporaneous teaching of the Latins : “The Divine expression of likeness is not of the same nature as the human, but living,

⁶ C. Arian. Or. iii. vol. i. p. 448. Sim. c. Gent. vol. i. p. 3.

⁷ Enarr. in Psalm 118, Joth.

⁸ Expos. in Ps. 118 ; Sermon. x. § 16.

⁹ Hexaëm. l. vi. c. 7.

and in truth an image that produces other images, so that all things that partake of it become thereby themselves images of God. Now, the image of God is Christ¹." The same doctrine is to be met with in the works of S. Epiphanius: "To man was assigned a godlike nature, and closely formed after that original and only-begotten image of the Father²." "The image and similitude of God," says S. Jerome, "is not the form of the body, but of the mind, which is fashioned to a resemblance to the true image of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God³." With equal clearness S. Augustine teaches that, "the similitude of God after which man was made may be understood to be the Word of God itself, that is, the only-begotten Son⁴." In citing the testimony of the early Church we need not proceed beyond the age of S. Cyril of Alexandria, who died about the middle of the fifth century. His testimony to the interpretation which we are seeking to establish is very explicit: "the image of God the Father is the Son, after whom we also have been modelled⁵."

It is evident, from the preceding brief quotations, that there is a general consent of early Christian writers in favour of that interpretation of the Sacred Text, which teaches that man was originally con-

¹ Adv. Eunom. l. v. ² Adv. Hær. l. ii. vol. i. p. 542.

³ In Ezek. i. vol. iv. p. 331. ⁴ De Genes. c. 16.

⁵ C. Julian. l. i. Aubert. 1638, p. 22.

formed to the Divine image, as expressed in the only-begotten, consubstantial Son. It may be added, that these ancient authors were so fully possessed and influenced by this view of the subject, that they hesitated not to illustrate the relation subsisting between the Father and the Son, by referring to the observed phenomena of the human mind, in which they saw faintly portrayed, as in a broken and corroded mirror, some outlines of the nature and operations of the Divine Word. One instance will suffice to make this understood. Tertullian, for example, thus illustrates the unity of the Father and the Son:—"There is somehow in man a second word, by which he speaks when he thinks, and by which he thinks when he speaks (as he had previously explained). His word itself is different from this. How much more fully then does this take place in God, as whose image and similitude man also is regarded, so that He has in Himself Reason, even when He is silent, and in Reason the Word⁶." Here then we may be content to leave this part of the question, while, trusting in God's guidance, we essay to advance another step in the great mystery of human nature.

II. It appears to be a law of constant observance in the new creation in Christ; a law founded, we

⁶ Adv. Prax. c. v. Sim. Greg. Nyss. De Hom. Opif. c. v. and, at some length, Fulgentius, l. iii. ad Monimum; De esse Filii apud Patrem. Ed. Bas. 1621, p. 387.

may presume, on the nature of spirit, and the essential constitution of the human soul, that every kind and instance of union with God, and resemblance to the Divine character, should result from the active presence of the Third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity. Thus He is the "Spirit of adoption," through whom we have God for our Father and Christ for our elder Brother⁷. It is He who renews the children of God from day to day, and creates in them an ever-growing conformity to their Divine model⁸; nay, the final resemblance of the glorified saint to Christ in glory will be the effect of His indwelling power⁹. Now, taking for our guide the analogy of the faith, we might perhaps venture to conclude, without other evidence, that the assimilation of the first man to the Divine Word was, in the same manner, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the proof of His presence in the soul. It will be seen, however, that this truth was also clearly recognised among the primitive Christians. Direct and complete statements to this effect are to be met with in early writers; but to prove the general reception of the doctrine, it is only necessary to show that the great teachers of

⁷ Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5, 6. Comp. Gal. iii. 26, 27, with John iii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

⁸ 2 Cor. iii. 18; Eph. iii. 16, 17; 1 John iii. 24.

⁹ Rom. viii. 11. Comp. Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 49.

the Church believed the first man to have been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost at his creation; for the Spirit of Christ must of necessity produce conformity to Christ in the soul which He vouchsafes to make His dwelling.

Justin Martyr, in the dialogue with Trypho and his disciples, illustrates the condition of believers anointed with the blood of Christ, by referring in these terms to the original and uncorrupted state of man:—"You can all understand that that formation of matter which God made Adam was the abode of the Divine inspiration¹." The expression employed here, the *abode* or *house* (οἶκος) of the Divine inspiration, as well as the comparison implied to the Christian "temples of the Holy Ghost," indicates clearly a permanent indwelling of the Spirit, and not merely the instantaneous effect of that life-giving breath which awoke the first man into a state of conscious being. In the Epistle to Diognetus, attributed to S. Justin, and certainly of no later date, the author finds occasion to remark, that "God, in the beginning, set the tree of life in the middle of Paradise, showing the way of life through knowledge, of which our first parents not making a pure use found themselves naked through the craft of the serpent. For neither," he continues, "is there life without know-

¹ c. xl.

ledge, nor sure knowledge without true life, on which account those trees were planted near to each other²." In this passage, then, we find the first man invested with a "true," that is, a spiritual, life, by which can only be understood a state of soul subjected to the effectual working of the Holy Ghost; and, connected with this, is the mention of another effect of the indwelling Spirit, expressed by the word "knowledge" (γνῶσις,) which identifies the doctrine of this writer with the general teaching of the Fathers on the same subject; and thus we are indirectly referred to the Holy Spirit as the efficient cause of every quality by the possession of which human nature was at the beginning assimilated to the Divine³.

That the belief in question was held generally by Christians of the second century may be collected from a statement of Tatian, the disciple of S. Justin: "We recognise two different kinds of spirits, of which one is called the soul, but the other is greater than the soul, being the image and similitude of God; and our first parents possessed them both⁴." Tertullian, in his treatise on Baptism, has recorded a statement no less clear than this, and equally to our present purpose; for explain-

² c. xii.

³ See Bishop Bull on the State of Man before the Fall; Works, Oxf. ed. 1846, vol. ii. p. 84. Or Burton's Bampton Lectures, Note 35, p. 361.

⁴ C. Græcos, inter Opp. Var. Paris, 1615, p. 150, D. Sim. p. 153, D.

ing the manner in which, under the dispensation of Christ, "man is restored to God, after the likeness of him who was originally formed in the image of God," he teaches that, in Christ, "man recovers the Spirit of God, which had by Him been breathed into him, but afterwards been lost through sin⁵." The conclusion is unavoidable, that the original resemblance of man to God was wrought in him by the agency of the Spirit. S. Irenæus represents Adam as becoming conscious, after his fall, of having "lost, through disobedience, that robe of sanctity which he had from the Spirit⁶." In another part of his work his subject leads him to assert, at some length, that human nature is not perfect in an individual, unless there be united in him the three components, body, soul, and spirit, that is, as he expressly says, the Spirit of the Father⁷. At the same time he recognises assimilation to the Son, as the effect proceeding from this participation of the Spirit: "Where there is the Spirit of the Father, there man, endued with true life, has been conformed to the Word of God⁸." To the same purpose we are taught, by S. Clemens of Alexandria;

⁵ c. v.⁶ l. iii. c. 37.⁷ l. v. c. 6.

⁸ l. v. c. 9. It should be noticed, that S. Irenæus is endeavouring to show that the *body* is essential to the perfection of man, and consequently destined to have a part in the resurrection to glory. The mention of the Spirit is therefore incidental to his argument;—a circumstance which gives additional weight to his words, as bearing testimony to a general belief.

“Other things God brought into being solely by His command; but He made man with His own hands, and breathed into him something of His own. . . . He who is good loved man for his goodness, and that which excited His love is something within; namely, that which is called the inspiration of God⁹.” S. Cyprian compares the effect of baptism to the formation of man out of the dust of the earth, and the subsequent gift of confirmation to the communication of the Spirit by the breath of God: “A man is not regenerated by the laying on of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that he may receive the Holy Ghost after he is regenerate; according to that which took place in the first man Adam. For God first formed him, and afterwards breathed into his nostrils the breath of life¹.” S. Hilary, in the same manner, understood the effect of the Divine breath breathed on the first man to include a gift of the Holy Ghost: “He was prepared or formed for this inspiration, through which the nature of the soul and body is held together to the perfection of life, as by a certain bond of the Spirit breathed into them².” The proposition which we are endeavouring to establish is thus expressly stated by S. Basil: “The

⁹ Pædag. l. i. c. 3. ¹ Ad Pompei. Ep. 73. Ed. Baluz.

² Enarr. in Ps. cxviii. Joth.

image of God is Christ, but the image of the Son is the Spirit, and they who partake of the Spirit are sons conformed to Christ³." Our series of witnesses may again conclude with the very apposite words of S. Cyril the Alexandrian: "We have been fashioned after the true and most exact likeness of the Father, that is, the Son, and His Divine beauty is impressed on our souls through participation of the Holy Ghost⁴."

It has been seen in these extracts that the doctrine, that man was at his creation made partaker of the Spirit of God, was inferred by many early Christian writers from the text, "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" or, if not gathered by them from that text originally, was at least frequently expressed in their interpretation of it. It should be observed, that they did not thereby exclude the gift of natural life from the effects of that inspiration; but they understood that God then imparted not only a natural, but *also* a Divine and spiritual life, that other and better effect of the communication of the breath of God, the Holy

³ Adv. Eunom. l. v.; *υἱὸς σύμμορφος*; Rom. viii. 29; Phil. iii. 21.

⁴ C. Julian. l. i. p. 25. Sim. in Joh. i. 14 (vol. iv. p. 94), where he refers to Gen. ii. 7: so on v. 32, p. 122. Glaph. in Gen. l. i. vol. i. p. 5. De S. Trin. D. vii. vol. v. p. 653. The Spirit imparted to Adam was the Spirit of Christ; in Joh. vii. 39, l. v. c. 2, vol. iv. p. 474; in Joh. xiv. 20, l. ix. p. 822, &c.

Ghost, the Giver of life⁵. The same truth was included in the well-known proposition of the schoolmen that man was “created in grace⁶.”

III. We have seen, then, that the father of the human race was made like unto the Son of God in all the nobler powers and qualities of the soul, and thus became a being capable of true spiritual and moral action. We have learnt, further, that he was sanctified from his creation by the presence of the Holy Ghost abiding in his soul, through virtue of whose indwelling he became, and might have remained, a living expression of that similitude in holiness and wisdom. This gift of the Spirit has been often termed a supernatural addition to the endowments of the first man; but, to speak strictly, we must regard the Divine gift as an essential part of the original and normal state of human nature. It was imparted to man with life itself, and without it he never was, nor ever can be, perfect;—without it he cannot preserve the Divine image in which he was created, nor perform actions in obedience to the higher dictates of his mind and heart, and pleasing to his Maker. In accordance with this doctrine, it was decreed by the second council of Orange, that “human nature could not by any

⁵ Ὁμοῦ γὰρ καὶ ζωὴν ἐνετίθει τὸ Πνεῦμα τῷ πλάσματι, καὶ τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ χαρακτῆρας θεοπρεπῶς ἐνεσήμεναιεν.—S. Cyr. Al. in Joh. i. 32, u. s.

⁶ See Bull, as before, p. 90.

means save itself without the aid of its Creator, even if it remained in that state of perfection in which it was created ⁷.”

Here, then, we behold a distinct exemplification of that law of Divine action, which has been expressed by saying, that there is “no power without the Spirit⁸.” For, while the form of rational being in the first man was of the Son, the life was of the Holy Ghost. The Son was the law and model of his creation; the Spirit, the plastic power, which, pervading the whole man, disposed him to conformity and love. The human image of the Word, thus instinct with the life-giving Spirit, lived, moved, and had its being within the man, and proceeded forthwith to reveal itself to consciousness in holy acts of thought and will. In this manner was wrought in Adam, and in the sole partaker of his uncorrupted nature, one of those great works of the Spirit of truth, which we must suppose to be included in the full meaning of our Lord’s promise to those who, through Him, are restored to that state from which our first parents fell: “He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you⁹.”

⁷ Can. XIX. Labbe and Cossart. tom. iv. p. 1666. Ed. Par. 1671.

⁸ *Præbit in conspectu Domini in Spiritu et virtute Eliæ.*—Luc. i. 17. “Bene ista junguntur; numquam enim sine virtute Spiritus, nec sine Spiritu virtus est.”—S. Ambrose, in loc.

⁹ John xvi. 14.

The doctrine which has been established enables us to give a probable explanation of the scriptural division of man into "spirit, and soul, and body¹;" of which, indeed, a brief statement has already occurred in a citation from S. Irenæus. For, by the word "soul," the Apostle has been thought to designate that part of man which is the seat of the affections and of the understanding, and the material, as it were, upon which the Divine image has been impressed; while by the word "spirit," he may intend to express that life-giving presence of the Holy Ghost by which the sensitive emotions are sanctified and guided to their proper end;—by which the Divine image in the soul was at the first impressed, and could alone be animated and preserved.

IV. Before we leave this part of the subject it will be well to guard more completely against a possible misconception, which might attribute to the doctrine here maintained an affinity with an error of some of the old heathen schools that has been lately reproduced among the speculative infidels of Germany. The language used may be imagined to favour the profane and monstrous notion that the human soul is, in some sense or other, an emanation from the substance of the Deity.

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23; Heb. iv. 12; Eph. iv. 23: "The spirit of your mind," *i. e.* the spirit which is in your mind.—See Bull, u. s. p. 97.

Such a supposition, however, would be utterly inconsistent with the general tenor of this discourse, and at direct variance with many expressions that have been deliberately used in it. We have not asserted the soul to be divine, but to have been a participant of the Divine Spirit. The soul has been spoken of as a creature, and it is not possible that the creature should be a portion of the creative power to which it owes its origin. But as no caution can be excessive when we are treating of a subject so full of awe and mystery, it may be well to remind the reader, that those authors to whose testimony we have referred saw as clearly as we do ourselves, the possibility of their language being thus misrepresented; that the rest of their teaching is wholly and obviously incompatible with such an interpretation of their meaning; and that they even denounced, in express terms, the error to which reference is made as an extreme and impious perversion of a sacred truth. Thus if S. Irenæus teaches, with others, that the image of God in man is derived from the Son, who is the Word or Reason of the Father, he affirms no less distinctly that "man is not increate, and that he had no eternal existence with God, like His proper Word²." S. Cyril of Alexandria, who is more full upon the subject of this chapter than any

² l. ii. c. 43.

other ancient author who has come under the writer's notice, while expressly teaching that the conformity of the soul to the Divine image was wrought in it by the Spirit, takes occasion to observe, that he "could not suppose any sensible person would imagine that the Breath (of God) proceeding from the substance of God became the soul of the animal man³." In short, there is not one acknowledged teacher of the early Church who could not have joined with heart and voice in the conclusive protestation of the great Father of the West: "It is an impiety if a man hesitate to deny that the soul is a part of God, or created or derived from His substance and nature, and not made out of nothing⁴."

³ In Joh. xiv. 20. l. ix.

⁴ S. Aug. c. Adversar. Leg. et Proph. i. 14. Sim. S. Chrysostom, Hom. XIII. in Gen. § 2. That great circumspection is required here will not be doubted by any who consider the misrepresentations to which authors have been exposed, whose language, whether from incaution or necessity, has been less exact than modern nicety requires: *e.g.* It is asserted by Mosheim (Notes on Cudworth's Intell. Syst. c. v. § 3, London, 1845, vol. iii. p. 329) that the opinion of S. Irenæus concerning Spirit (as quoted in the text, p. 136) is "a peculiar and remarkable one." The sentences there cited from other authors will show the value of this remark, the only foundation for which appears to be, that S. Irenæus believed the common doctrine to be implied in 1 Thess. v. 23; in which belief, however, he is not alone. The writer ventures to add: "The pious father seems to have regarded the Holy Spirit as a certain Divine nature every where diffused, a portion of which is

received by all who espoused the faith in Jesus Christ." To justify this charge, he refers to the use of such expressions as "partem aliquam Spiritus Ejus sumimus" (l. v. c. 8). This language is far from being exact; but we have no right to assume that S. Irenæus is responsible for its possible bad meaning. We have only to think over the phrases by which the early Greek divines usually expressed *participation* (whether in things divisible or indivisible), remembering, at the same time, the source from which their words are borrowed, to be convinced that it is at least extremely doubtful whether this suspicious peculiarity had any place in the original, and is not rather entirely due to the corrupt and insufficient Latin, in which alone that portion of the work survives. Our own translation of μετόχους, in Heb. vi. 4, and κοινωνοί, in 2 Pet. i. 4, by the word *partakers*, and the Vulg. tr. of the former by *participes*, would both provoke the same censure, if custom had not made us unmindful of the derivation and strict meaning of those words. But if we suppose S. Irenæus to be the author of the Latin phrase, or that his Greek was equally objectionable, we have still no reason to mistrust the soundness of his doctrine. He himself explains the words, "partem aliquam Spiritus," by adding "hoc est, partem ejus honoris qui a Deo nobis promissus est;" and then shelters himself under the authority of S. Paul, by referring expressly to Eph. i. 13, 14: "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance." The word ἀρραβὼν, translated "*earnest*," signifies a *part* now received of that which will be received in full hereafter. The inheritance spoken of includes, therefore, a more abundant gift of the Divine Spirit than is vouchsafed in this life, and accordingly S. Paul twice describes the present privilege of Christians as "the earnest of the Spirit;" that is, if we explain it to the *letter*, the *portion* already imparted of that Spirit whose indwelling presence in greater power and measure will constitute the happiness and glory of the redeemed for ever. The passages referred to are 2 Cor. i. 22: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," which is manifestly parallel to the

one cited above, — and 2 Cor. v. 5. In the same strict analysis the phrase ἀπαρχὴ τοῦ πνεύματος, Rom. viii. 23, must be explained to mean a “portion of the Spirit;” the word ἀπαρχὴ being applied to indivisibles only by a very unusual metaphor. The expression ἐκ μέτρου, Joh. iii. 34, is subject to the same disadvantage. The same may be said of the words פִּישָׁנִים בְּרוּחְךָ, which we translate “a double portion of thy spirit,” 2 Kings ii. 9. The truth is, that human language cannot adequately represent the things of God; and, since we are assured of the orthodoxy of S. Irenæus on other grounds, the most we are justified in saying is, that he was less exact in expression than necessity compelled him to be. Examples of equal laxity, however, might be brought from many writers, both ancient and modern, of whose sound meaning there can be no question. To give one instance: Justin Martyr might, on similar grounds, be accused of entertaining the very same opinion with respect to the Second Person in the Holy Trinity; for he describes the heathen as living κατὰ σπερματικοῦ Λόγου μέρος, but Christians, on the other hand, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς Λόγον, ὃ ἐστὶ Χριστοῦ, γινῶσιν καὶ θεωρίαν. Ap. ii. c. 8. Sim. 10. 13. It is evident that the notion which Mosheim attributes to S. Irenæus would necessarily involve a disbelief of the Personal existence of the Holy Ghost, a heresy utterly irreconcilable with his language upon various occasions. See l. ii. c. 47, p. 203 A; l. iv. c. 14, p. 331 C, c. 17, p. 334 A, c. 37, p. 371 D; and Bull, Def. Fid. Nic. II. 5. 9.

CHAPTER VII.

LEAVING, now, the simple assertion of the doctrine of human nature in its ancient integrity, as conformed to the Son and instinct with the Spirit of God, we proceed to trace some of those lineaments or features in which the first man so far resembled his Divine original that he could be described in the Word of truth as having been created “in the image and after the likeness” of his Maker.

I. In the first place, we have occasion to consider the moral constitution of man, as he came fresh from the creative hand of God.

The Holy Scripture declares unequivocally that “God made man upright ;” but had it been wholly silent on the subject, this conclusion must have followed from those same considerations to which we must always refer if we desire to ascertain the full force and meaning of the inspired text.

1. The nobler part of man must certainly have been that on which the Divine similitude was most remarkably impressed ; and in this nobler part the highest place must be assigned to moral qualities.

But if we were to suppose that moral goodness is, as some have pretended, only the unconscious experience of self-interest, or, as others, a fluctuating standard that varies with the varying circumstances of the individual, we should, in effect, be denying that the soul of the creature bore any resemblance to the fixed moral attributes of the Creator.

From the same point of departure, the image of God in man, we arrive at the same conclusion by a somewhat different process. We have seen that the Divine Word was the model upon which our nature was originally framed; so that whatever we know of the Word, exclusive of the essentials of divinity, we may also predicate of the first man. When, in the fulness of time, the Son descended from the bosom of the Father, and, assuming our nature, was in that nature "anointed with the Holy Ghost," He exhibited the moral perfection of that humanity of which He had been the pattern from the beginning¹. From His example, therefore, we are taught not only what man must strive to be under the Gospel, but also the normal moral state of human nature, the state from which Adam, and, in him, his descendants, fell. Now that we have beheld the Divine Archetype, we know how admirable was the human copy before its glory was defaced by sin.

¹ S. Iren. v. 16. S. Clem. A. Pædag. i. 12.

2. From the same premises we infer the indelible character of the distinction between good and evil ². That only can be morally good which is agreeable to the unperturbed moral dispositions of the human soul, pronounced good at the creation by their Maker, and, since then, displayed in their perfection by the Son of God made man. But, inasmuch as the original righteousness of man was the result of his conformity to the moral attributes of God, no change of dispensation could render possible the substitution of evil for good, as the legitimate and fixed object of His approbation. The Almighty Himself cannot decree that to be virtuous which is now vicious, nor can He reverse or set aside the simplest canon of morality; for such a revolution in His laws must be preceded by a corresponding change in His own nature, which is the Archetype as well as the Fountain of all good; whereas the instinctive testimony of the human heart, the universal tradition of all ages and people, the united witness of Providence and of the natural world, and the declaration of God Himself, conveyed both by His prophets and by His Son, with one consentient voice proclaim Him to be, unalterably, essentially, and by the condition of His nature, good.

The same reasons would preclude the introduction of another principle into His moral govern-

² See D. Stewart's *Active and Moral Powers*, b. ii. c. 5, § 1.

ment, if He were to create a new world and people it with a fresh race of intelligent and moral agents.

3. While man retained his innocence, this inward type of goodness, impressed on human nature by the hand of God, discharged the office of an active moral sense, so far as that was needed before the actual experience of sin. It may be described, indeed, as the original form of that faculty as it now exists and is exercised amid the temptations of a corrupted world. In strict language it could not be called a moral *sense*, as it was simple, innate, and unconscious goodness, whose existence involved no direct bearing on its opposite. Virtue and vice are now partially correlatives in human action, so that the limits of the one cannot always be defined without some reference to the other; but it was not so when goodness was the instinct of every affection, and sin was yet unknown. When, therefore, we ascribe the power to *discern* between good and evil to finite beings, it must be to those alone who have had both in their choice, and, consequently, have already entered on a course of moral action. Thus God Himself is recorded to have spoken of the effect of sin; "Behold the man is become as one of Us to know good and evil³;" and in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read of those "who from the effect of use, or habit, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil⁴."

³ Gen. iii. 22.

⁴ Heb. v. 14.

4. As was before intimated, the original righteousness of man was a necessary result of his creation in the image of God; and those who interpret the one fact as the Church has always understood it, can have no hesitation in acknowledging the other. It may be desirable however to show by a few references that this doctrine also was familiar to the minds of the first Christians. It will be seen from the citations which I am about to make, that they use various forms of expression in speaking of this gift; at one time representing it as a law to nature; at another time, as a state; and sometimes as a power; but, whatever words they use, they always clearly indicate their belief in the positive and actual sanctity of our first parents. Moreover, as was natural, they not unfrequently make direct reference either to the Son as the Source and Archetype of this perfection, or to the Spirit as its efficient cause.

In the Clementine Liturgy, a document of very great authority, we find an ascription of praise to Almighty God for having "given to man the faculty of rational discernment, which distinguishes between piety and impiety, and takes note of righteousness and unrighteousness⁵." Justin Martyr describes the principles of morality as "natural notions," and speaks of certain actions as being

⁵ Constit. Apost. l. viii. c. 12; Cotel. p. 347.

“universally, naturally, and eternally good and right ⁶.” We are told by Athenagoras that when God created man, He implanted in him “a law to preserve and secure His gifts pertaining to a wise course of life and to rational existence ⁷.” Tertulian declares that there was “an unwritten law understood by nature,” first “given to Adam and Eve in Paradise ⁸.” S. Clemens of Alexandria speaks of a “natural, connate law,” and affirms that this is the same as that given by revelation ⁹. The same truth is taught by Origen, who speaks both for himself and the whole Church: “We Christians recognise the law which has by nature authority over all, which is identical with the law of God ¹.” S. Athanasius is a witness to the same truth, which he connects directly with the doctrine investigated in the last chapter by ascribing the original excellence of man to a participation of the Word of God: “God not only made us out of nothing, but also granted to us to live after God by the grace of the Word ².” To the same effect S. Basil affirms, that “the soul of man, from having been created in the image of God, thought that which was good, and

⁶ D. c. Tryph. c. xciii. ; ib. c. xlv.

⁷ De Res. Mort., Opp. Var., Par. 1615, p. 54.

⁸ Adv. Jud. c. ii. “Omne malum aut timore aut pudore natura perfudit.”—Id. Ap. c. i.

⁹ Strom. i. sub fin.

¹ C. Cels. l. v. p. 258.

² De Incarn. Verb. p. 57. *κατὰ Θεόν*, Eph. iv. 24.

knew the enjoyment of it³:" and similarly we are taught by his brother Gregory, that inasmuch as man was made in the image of God, "there is in us the form of all good, all virtue and wisdom⁴." Proceeding downwards, we hear S. Chrysostom declare that God placed "the law of nature" in Adam at his very creation, "to be a present indwelling protection to the whole race of man⁵." This law of nature he defines to be "conscience," and the self-taught knowledge of good and evil⁶." S. Augustine speaks of a "certain force of the mind and use of the reason by which Adam received the precept of God and the law of the commandment with docility, and was enabled to observe them, if he liked, with ease⁷." It is frequently taught by this father, and by others, that the body of Adam before the fall, "though animal and mortal, was, through grace, in every respect obedient to the soul⁸." S. Prosper speaks of virtues "the halo and glory" of which invested the soul of the first man⁹. S. Cyril, in his treatise against Julian, declares, that "God created man to good works, endowed with all goodness, and perfect in

³ Hom. ix. Ed. Ben. 1722, vol. ii. p. 78.

⁴ S. Greg. Nyss. de Hom. Opif. c. 16.

⁵ Hom. xii. in Rom. vii. 12.

⁶ Hom. xii. ad Antioch. § 3.

⁷ De Pecc. Mer. et Rem. l. i. c. 68.

⁸ Ibid. c. 21. Sim. l. ii. c. 36.

⁹ C. Cass. Coll. c. xix. Ed. Colon. 1565.

respect of every principle residing in the soul¹." And to the same purpose Theodoret declares, that "when the Creator fashioned human-kind, He implanted in their nature a power to discern between those things that are good and their opposites²."

II. The capacity of spiritual knowledge and of intercourse with God forms another feature of the resemblance borne by the first man to the Divine Exemplar of humanity. That the possession and exercise of this faculty are closely dependent on the moral state, might be readily inferred from what is recorded of the communion of man with God before the fall. Their intimate connexion is, however, frequently asserted in the Holy Scriptures. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Whoever is willing to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God³." It will be observed, therefore, that the privilege of knowing God, and holding communion with Him, is necessarily implied in every mention of the moral rectitude of man; so that, viewed in this light, the statements that have been adduced from early writers prove more than they

¹ L. iii. p. 89.

² De Cur. Græc. Aff. Serm. xii. Oxf. p. 468.

³ Ps. xxv. 14; Matt. v. 8; Joh. vii. 17.

were immediately brought to prove. I do not propose to dwell on this subject at present, and will, therefore, in addition, only call attention to the clear recognition of this connexion between the *privileges* and the *state* of man in several of the passages which I am about to adduce, with a view to show that the primitive Church believed Adam to have received with his life a gift of spiritual intelligence and wisdom.

In the ancient Liturgy, to which reference has been already made, it is asserted that God “gave to man at his creation an implanted law that he might possess the principles of the knowledge of God from within himself, and out of his own store⁴.” The same thing is told us indirectly by Tatian when he says that the soul after the fall, “being unable to fix its regard on the things that are perfect owing to its separation from the Spirit, going astray in its search after God, devised a multitude of gods⁵.” To the same purpose Tertullian says, that when Adam once gave way to disobedience, “he ceased to be wise to God, —he became unable to bear heavenly things⁶.” It is implied, of course, by both these writers, that, before the fall, our first parents did possess this wisdom and capacity. We have seen that S. Irenæus maintains a participation of the Spirit to be neces-

⁴ Constit. Apost. u. s.

⁵ C. Græc. p. 152, D.

⁶ De Patient. c. v.

sary to the perfection of humanity. It is with reference to this view of perfection that he quotes S. Paul saying,—“I speak wisdom among those that are perfect.” The inference is manifest, that he regarded the “perfect,” among whom his language obliges us to include Adam, as endowed with a capacity of spiritual wisdom⁷. Traces of the same principle are discernible in the language of S. Clemens of Alexandria: “Is not man justly said,” he asks, “to have been made in the image of God : since God creates all things by Reason, and the man who is replenished with knowledge (ὁ γνωστικός γενόμενος) performs good actions by his faculty of reason⁸?” He has immediately in view the state of the Christian fully instructed in the mystery of godliness; but we may infer from his language, that he considered the wise intelligence in spiritual things, of which he speaks, to be a chief feature in that image of God, of which our first parents (to whom his very words direct our thoughts) were undoubtedly, with one exception, the most perfect, as well as the first and most remarkable examples. S. Athanasius, in his tract against the Heathen, dwells on the same subject at some length. “The Creator of the universe by His own Word, our Saviour Jesus Christ, made the race of man after His own image, and gave him power, through his

⁷ L. v. c. 6.⁸ Strom. vi. p. 682.

resemblance to Him, to contemplate and become acquainted with the things that are, imparting to him a conception and knowledge of His own eternity; that, while he remained the same, he might neither lose the mental vision of God, nor abandon the society of the Saints For, having no impediment to the knowledge of God, he always contemplates through his own purity the image of the Father, God the Word, in whose image he was made⁹.” “Man should have remained in the glory which he had with God,” observes S. Basil, “and then he would have possessed no fictitious, but a genuine dignity, being made great through the power of God, reflecting the light of the Divine Wisdom, and rejoicing in life eternal and in the good¹.” S. Augustine, in his comment on the first chapter of S. John’s Gospel, thus derives all human wisdom from the original creation of our first parents after the similitude of God. “Man, being made in the image of God, has a reasonable mind, by which he may discern wisdom. Therefore that Life, by which all things were made, that Life itself, is light;—not of all animals whatever, but the light of men².”

⁹ Vol. i. p. 3. Sim. de Incarn. Verb. p. 63.

¹ Hom. xx. vol. ii. p. 156.

² Tract. i. in Joh. Ev. c. 18. The second extract in the text is from a passage of which more deserves to be transcribed from its bearing on our whole subject. “Filius recte dicitur ex Ipso (scil. Patre); cætera per Ipsum. Præcessit enim forma omnium summe implens unum de quo est, ut cætera quæ sunt,

“Most rightly,” says elsewhere the same Father, “is man said to have been made after the image and similitude of God; for otherwise he would not be able to behold with the eyes of his mind the truth which is unchangeable.” Among the effects of Adam’s transgression, S. Prosper mentions “the loss of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord,” gifts of the Spirit ascribed by the prophet Isaiah to the second Adam³. S. Cyril will prove the continuance of the doctrine in the Church of S. Athanasius. “The mind of man was made able to fix its regard on God and on the things of God, according to the measure assigned to his nature, being full of eagerness for every object of its admiration, and endowed with a knowledge of all good, as yet simple, as it were, and uniform, and gazing on it without distraction, as seeing it alone, and inclining towards it with the full and entire sway of its desires, and advancing towards it with a profoundly earnest activity⁴.” To the same effect Fulgentius teaches, that “God implanted in the

in quantum sunt uni similia, per eam formam fierent. Horum alia sic sunt per ipsam, ut ad ipsam etiam sint, ut omnis rationalis et intellectualis creatura; in qua homo rectissime dicitur factus ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei: non enim aliter incommutabilem veritatem posset mente conspiciere.”—De Ver. Rel. c. 81; al. 43.

³ C. Cass. Coll. c. xix.; Is. xi. 2.

⁴ C. Julian l. iii. p. 89.

first man, whom, of His free goodness, He made good after His own image, the faculty of the knowledge and of the love of God ⁵.”

III. The truths which have been established in this and the preceding chapter appear now to resolve themselves into a distinction which requires to be stated with every circumstance of caution and humility; for it is not possible to tread with too much reverence upon ground so holy.

It would seem that, although the capacity of Divine wisdom resided in Adam as an image of the Word, yet actual illumination was from the Spirit, agreeably to that which takes place in those of his descendants, who, through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, are made partakers of that grace. And this principle appears to have the clear sanction of the later Scriptures. “The things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit of God.” Therefore from Him has proceeded from the beginning whatever true sense or knowledge of Divine things has ever been vouchsafed to man. Another statement in the same chapter confirms the inference. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ⁶.” The language of the Apostle is

⁵ De Incarn. et Grat. c. xii. p. 159.

⁶ 1 Cor. ii. 11. 14. ὁ ψυχικὸς, the man who hath a soul only, is opposed τῷ πνευματικῷ, to him who hath the Spirit also. Sim. Jude 19. ψυχικοὶ, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες.

quite general and equally applicable to every period of the world, and every condition of the human race.

We may suppose that, without this gift of "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding," the Word might have been life to man, but not light. "The Word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom⁷;" but a power was still required to draw forth the "living water" from its secret source. The lamp was perfect and prepared for use, but would not yield "the light of the knowledge of God," unless a flame from heaven fell upon it. The life which the Word is, "being in us, becomes also the first principle of the light of knowledge, and, with some, this life, it may be, is only potentially and not actually light; namely, with those who have no zeal to inquire into the subjects of Divine knowledge⁸." And such, we know, would be the state of all men, but for that penetrative energy and deep earnestness of moral purpose which are formed in the regenerate by the quickening impulses of the indwelling Spirit, the Spirit who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God⁹." In what manner, then, the all-wise Author of religion is accustomed to work in the outward ordinances of teaching or the sacraments, in the same, also, does

⁷ Ecclus. i. 5.

⁸ Orig. in Joh. i. 4, tom. iii.

⁹ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

He appear to work with respect to the Divine principles of sacred knowledge, when He writeth His law in the heart of the spiritual and perfect man, and “maketh him to understand wisdom secretly.” The form and substance are from the Son, the power is of the Spirit. It is the office of the Son to speak (whether in the soul or to the sense), and of the Spirit to teach. “We take in the words from the speaking of the Son, but understand them from the teaching of the Spirit¹.”

We conclude, therefore, that the first members of the human family, from their very creation in the image of God, derived whatever they possessed of Divine and moral wisdom from the light which was shed on its expression, whether within them or without, by the Spirit whom they had received with life itself. From the Spirit came the living import and significance of every holy principle impressed upon their souls as they were conformed to the Divine Archetype; no less than of every truth which He conveyed to them by voice or vision, or through the ministry of angels, or which they gleaned by intellectual deduction from the observed phenomena of Providence and nature.

Thus, then, was it provided that upon the rational

¹ S. Aug. Tract. in Joh. xiv. 25—27.

nature of man, still glorious in the unmarred similitude of God, might be reared the goodly structure of religious wisdom, to be the guide, the stay, and glory of our kind. This is that never-failing spring of blessing which the son of Sirach celebrates as the “mother of fair love and fear, and knowledge and holy hope².” It may be termed a human attribute indeed, because it was given to reside in man; but those who would glorify the Giver for His gift will confess that it is not of man, though it be in man; that in every view it is from God, and must be referred to Him; an earthly copy of the Divine Original, an emanation from His proper and eternal Wisdom, the “breath of the power of God, a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness³.”

² Eccus. xxiv. 18.

³ Wisd. vii. 25, 26.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the last chapter we completed the investigation, which we proposed to ourselves, respecting the capacity of spiritual and moral wisdom possessed by our first parents in their state of innocence. It now therefore remains for us to inquire whether these endowments of the soul survived, in any measure, the first transgression of the will of God, upon which, as the Church hath ever taught, the quickening and enlightening Spirit, “who had conformed man to the Divine image, and was in an ineffable manner impressed like a seal upon his soul, was withdrawn from him¹,” and with the Spirit he lost those high graces and perfections of which His indwelling presence had been the fountain and creative source.

The forfeiture of the Spirit, by which the nature of man was thus nearly exhausted of its positive good, was accompanied by another injury to our moral being; for the first act of disobedience was

¹ S. Cyr. Al. De S. Trin. D. viii. tom. v. p. 653.

the commencement of an evil habit of soul, which, by a mysterious law, has communicated itself to all who are naturally descended from the first sinner.

Now it is manifest that ignorance of God and of His laws, as well as actual transgression, would proceed, as of necessity, from the withdrawal of His aid, and the mutilation and corruption of His perfect work. To borrow the language of the ancients: "The soul had wings to mount and soar while it possessed that perfect Spirit; but when it threw Him off by sin, it flew weakly, like a fledgeling, and fell to the ground; descending from its intercourse with heaven, it coveted communion with the things of earth ²." "The mind then no longer employed itself upon the proper subjects of its action. Self and the things of self withdrew it from the contemplation of the things of God. It was still powerful, quick, and active, but its power was wasted upon objects of sense; and its activity, not moving in the path of virtue, could not lead it to the sight of God ³."

Let it not be supposed, however, that, in giving this description of the degenerate state of human nature, we mean to represent it as utterly incapable of any good in the long interval between the sin of Adam and the perfect obedience of Christ. Were

² Tat. c. Græc. c. xx.

³ See S. Athan. c. Gent. pp. 4, 5.

we so to exaggerate the unhappiness of the creature, we should be detracting from the unbounded goodness of the Creator. That every feature of the Divine image was not effaced when Adam fell, appears to have been intimated in the charge which God gave to Noah and his sons after the flood. The life of man was to be held for ever sacred, for the reason that, "in the image of God made He man⁴." The same truth seems also to be implied in that incidental reference of S. Paul; "a man indeed ought not to cover his head (in prayer), forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God⁵." There can be no doubt of the judgment of the early Church upon this question; for it is recorded as an error of some professed followers of Origen, that they believed Adam to have wholly lost the image of God upon his disobedience⁶. It would not per-

⁴ Gen. ix. 6.

⁵ 1 Cor. xi. 7.

⁶ S. Epiph. ad Joh. Ep. Hier. Opp. tom. ii. p. 316; or in S. Jerome's Works, tom. ii. p. 111. Sim. Adv. Hær. l. iii. tom. i. p. 814. He accuses Origen himself of holding this error; but incorrectly, if we may trust to Ruffinus, the translator of his treatise *Περί Ἀρχῶν*. "Consideremus si non etiam impium videtur ut mens quæ Dei capax est, substantialem recipiat interitum: tanquam hoc ipsum, quod intelligere Deum potest et sentire, non ei sufficere possit ad perpetuitatem; maxime cum, etiam si per negligentiam decidat mens ne pure et integre in se recipiat Deum, semper tamen habeat in se velut semina quædam reparandi ac renovandi melioris intellectus, cum ad imaginem etiam et similitudinem Dei qui creavit eum interior homo, qui et rationalis dicitur, renovatur."—*De Princ. Anaceph.* sub fin.

haps have been surprising, if S. Augustine had been carried into that extreme in the excitement of the Pelagian controversy; but we find him teaching, and repeating with deliberation, the common doctrine of the Church, that “the image of God in the human soul was not so far defaced by the corrupting influence of earthly affections, that no last lineaments, as it were, of that similitude remained in it ⁷.”

I. But if the image of God in man was not utterly destroyed, it follows that he was not left entirely destitute of an internal rule of action, or of the principles of spiritual knowledge. S. Paul, accordingly, was able to assert of the corrupt children of many generations of heathen parents, that they were “a law unto themselves, showing the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts mutually accusing or else excusing one another.” It must be observed, also, that it is implied in the discourse of the Apostle, that there were always some, who, unacquainted with the written law, did, notwithstanding, to use his words, “perform by nature the things contained in it ⁸.” A statement of S. Clemens, his disciple, will serve to illustrate his doctrine. This apostolic writer affirms that

⁷ De Spir. et Lit. c. xxviii.; Retract. l. i. c. 26.

⁸ Rom. ii. 14, 15.

“in every generation the Lord gave a place of repentance to all who desired to turn to Him⁹.” In other words he ascribes to fallen man in every age not only a capacity of good desires, but even an ability (the constant aid of God being understood) to bring those good desires to good effect.

1. This view of the state and capabilities of the unregenerate is confirmed by our present experience of the heathen world; but perhaps the strongest testimony to its truth is conveyed in the declarations of early Christian writers, who, from their having been more or less engaged in a personal conflict with the popular idolatry and corruption, or with the wild theistic schemes of the philosophers, might naturally be suspected of a bias in the opposite direction.

Thus Justin Martyr does not scruple to speak of Socrates and those who resembled him, as “good and earnest” men¹. S. Clemens of Alexandria maintained, as it is well known, that Philosophy was a gift of God to the Greeks, as the Law was to the children of Israel; and that, to a certain degree, it was effectual to correct their manners, and, by thus forming their character, to prepare them for the reception of the doctrine

⁹ Ep. i. c. 7.

¹ Ap. ii. c. 7. The word used is *σπουδαῖοι*, which he opposes to *φᾶῦλοι*.

of Christ². Origen affirms that all have “sound preconceptions” on the subject of morals, God having “scattered in the souls of all mankind the seeds of those things which He taught by the prophets and by our Saviour, that every one may be without excuse in the judgment of God³.” S. Ambrose, while insisting on the necessity of faith in Christ, yet allows virtues to the heathen, and even to the Jews of his day: “How many Gentiles are compassionate and temperate! Some Jews, too, are chaste, and very studious in the Scriptures, and diligent⁴.” The experience of S. Jerome was the same, and he expressly accounts for the fact by ascribing a certain power of goodness to the unregenerate: “How many of the philosophers have we heard and read of, and even seen ourselves, who are chaste, patient, moderate, liberal, temperate, kind, despisers of the honours and the pleasures of the world, and lovers of righteousness as much as of knowledge! And whence, I pray, could men, alien from God, derive these things

² Οὐκ ἄποπον καὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἐκ τῆς θείας προνοίας δεδῶσθαι, προπαιδεύουσιν εἰς τὴν διὰ Χριστοῦ τελείωσιν. Strom. vi. p. 690.—Compare l. i. pp. 278. 309; l. vii. p. 710. The reader may not be displeased to be reminded of the words of Calvin: “Et philosophia præclarum est Dei donum; et qui omnibus sæculis extiterunt docti viri, eos ipse excitavit, ut ad veri notitiam mundo prælucere.”—In Mr. Keble’s Hooker, iii. 8. 10. Note 9.

³ c. Cels. l. i. p. 6.

⁴ Enarr. in Ps. i. § 41.

which are acceptable to God? Whence had they these good things, but from the good of nature ⁵." Among the Homilies of S. Basil is one designed to teach the Christian youth of his day how they might derive profit from the literature of the heathen. With this view he takes occasion to enumerate many instances of high morality among those who were aliens from both covenants ⁶. It is allowed also by S. Augustine that actions are recorded of heathen men "agreeable to the rule of righteousness," and, therefore, "deservedly and rightly entitled to our praise ⁷." And to the same purpose his friend Prosper, while depressing to the utmost the moral power of the unregenerate, allows that "many of them are followers of justice, temperance, continence, and benevolence ⁸." It deserves to be remarked, that these early writers did not place themselves under any temptation to exaggerate the excellencies which they observed in the Jew or heathen, by entertaining any strong opinion of their value to the individual. Some of them supposed that the benefit arising from the practice of virtue among the unregenerate is confined to this present life, while others appear to deny that any benefit ensues, though it may well

⁵ Ad Demetr. Ep. i. p. 2. Sim. in Ep. ad Gal. i. 16.

⁶ Opp. tom. ii. p. 173.

⁷ De Sp. et Lit. c. xxvii.

⁸ c. Cassian. Collat. c. xxvii. p. 125 D.

be doubted if they would have acknowledged such a meaning⁹.

2. When, however, it is said that men act rightly by nature, it is not to be understood so as to exclude the grace of Christ and the assistance of the Spirit. They are not altogether destitute of Divine aid, though “without the faith and the Gospel of Christ.” The mercy vouchsafed through His incarnation was in some measure anticipated from the very time when it became necessary for the restoration of mankind; nor, since His advent, has it been entirely confined within those boundaries by which His chosen people are enclosed. He who is declared to be “the Saviour of all men¹,” hath left in all, whether forestalling or exceeding the conditions of the covenant of grace, a remnant, however small, of spiritual and moral strength; the embers², not to be extinguished, though emitting but a faint glow, of that “reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice,” in which the whole being of man

⁹ E. g. “Quæ omnia non frustra quidem neque inutiliter habent, multumque ex eis in hac vita honoris et gloriæ consequuntur.”—S. Prosp. u. s. “Sed fructum non habent (scil. Gentiles), quia fidem non habent.” Sim. of the virtuous Jews: “sine fructu sunt et versantur ut folia.”—S. Ambr. in l. c.

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 10.

² ὥσπερ ἔναυσμα τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ (sc. τοῦ Πν. Ἁγ.).—Tat. c. Græc. c. xiii.

was continually offered to his Maker in the temple of Paradise.

In strict accordance with our twofold conclusion respecting the source of human goodness, the moral excellencies and capabilities of the unregenerate are sometimes traced by early writers to a participation of the Word, and sometimes to the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Thus, for example, S. Irenæus, in one part of his great work, speaks of "the Word, by whom all things were made," as having been "at all times present to the human race;" while in another he affirms that "the Spirit of God has been with men from the beginning in all the dispensations of God³." Origen declares that "nothing good was ever done among men except through the Word of God dwelling in the souls of those who were able (were it for a brief space only) to receive such influences of the Divine Word⁴." Similarly S. Jerome infers from S. John's description of the Word as "the light which lighteth every man," that "no man is born without Christ;" and that all have in them the "seeds of wisdom, justice, and the other virtues⁵." Another

³ l. iii. c. 20, and l. iv. c. 53.

⁴ c. Cels. l. vi. p. 329. Sim. l. iv. p. 163.

⁵ In Ep. ad Gal. i. 16. The phrase "*semina virtutum*" was afterwards abused by the Pelagians, and therefore rejected by the Catholics.—S. Prosp. c. Cass. Coll. c. xxvii.

ancient author asks, on the other hand, "Who can doubt that those who, of whatever nation, in any age, were able to please God, were separated by the Spirit of Divine grace⁶?"

To show that this principle had a really practical character in the theological system of the early Church, it may be sufficient to refer to an application of it to an individual case, which occurs in the Epistles of S. Augustine. Speaking of the well-known conversion of Polemo by the discourse of Xenocrates on temperance and virtue, this Father declares his belief that that remarkable change of sentiment and conduct could only be the effect of a Divine agency⁷.

3. Now, we have seen that by a distinct principle in the Divine government of the world, the knowledge of things spiritual is inseparably connected with the observance of the moral law⁸. We are therefore prepared, by the preceding statements and reflections, to find ascribed to the unregenerate some vestige of the power to know their Maker, as well as of the power to do His will. S. Clemens thus affirms the general principle: "Into all men, without exception, but especially into those studious of letters, is infused a certain influence from God; on which account they acknowledge,

⁶ De Vocat. Gent. l. ii. c. 5, inter Opp. S. Prosp. p. 300 B.

⁷ Ep. 144, Al. 130.

⁸ Ch. vii. p. 153.

even involuntarily, that God is one, immortal and uncreated⁹." A similar statement from an excellent, though unknown, author of the Western Church, to whom we have before referred, will set the principle before us in sufficient light. In the well-known Treatise on the Call of the Gentiles, we are taught, that "a certain measure of the doctrine from above was at all times given to the whole race of man, which, though the effect of a more secret and less bountiful grace, suffices, notwithstanding, for a remedy to some, for a witness to all¹." The testimony of Holy Scripture is quite in accordance with this view; for we find S. Paul declaring that even the heathen are justly subject to God's wrath, "because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them²." And such, before S. Paul, was the experience and judgment of the Jewish Church, which cannot be suspected of estimating too highly the spiritual condition of the Gentiles. Thus we read in the book of Ecclesiasticus, "That Wisdom, the mother of fair love and fear, and knowledge and holy hope," "acquired a possession in the waves of the sea, and in all the earth, and in every people and nation³."

4. As the capacity of spiritual wisdom in the first

⁹ Admon. ad Gent. p. 45 A.

¹ l. ii. c. 15, p. 304 A.

² Rom. i. 19.

³ Eccclus. xxiv. 6. 18.

man was a necessary consequence of his being conformed to the image of the Son, so the remains of that faculty in his descendants must be ascribed, no less than their susceptibility of moral training, to their participation of, or assimilation to, Him, the Word or Wisdom of the Father. This truth is without doubt included in the statement of S. John:—"That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world ⁴." We have seen that S. Jerome inferred from these words of the beloved disciple that no man is born without Christ and the principles of moral goodness. He also read in them a declaration that "a knowledge of God dwells in all men by nature ⁵." S. Justin is a witness to the same interpretation when he attributes to the Word, of which all men are partakers, whatever knowledge of Divine truth was attained by the philosophers or others ⁶. The language of the later Jewish Church, if we may suppose that we hear her voice in Philo, was very similar to this, and, without doubt, conveyed a doctrine approximating to the Christian truth, however imperfect and indistinct might be the conceptions of those who uttered it. It is the opinion of that author that "all men in their intellectual part have intimate relations with the

⁴ Joh. i. 9.

⁵ In l. c. p. 170.

⁶ Ap. ii. c. 10. Χριστῷ δέ, τῷ καὶ ὑπὸ Σωκράτους ἀπὸ μέρους γνωσθέντι (Λόγος γὰρ ἦν καὶ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν παντὶ ὢν), κ.τ.λ.

Word of God," as being derived from him who was made in the image of God, and still preserving a resemblance, however faint, to their original ⁷.

5. Here, however, we recur to the distinction before made between the man formed in the image of God only, and the same man also quickened by the Spirit. We are possessed of a certain inherent power to understand the things of God, because our nature is not entirely bereft of its original resemblance to the Uncreated Source of reason and of wisdom; but the actual attainment of a saving knowledge of our Maker is no necessary result of the possession of such power. Our understanding considered with reference to spiritual things is evidently analogous to, as well as connected with, the faculty of moral discernment; but we know well that the conscience, although a reflection of the Divine source and Archetype of moral good, possesses in itself, but, as it were, a dormant life, and only a potential activity. Even so the faculty of spiritual discernment is in itself the inert form and not the living spring of knowledge. And as without the Spirit it is not possible for man to read clearly or to obey the moral law engraven on his heart, so without the same Spirit, he is unable to realize those shadows of the infinite truth respecting the nature, attributes, and will of God, which are still obscurely

⁷ De Mund. Opif. Pfeiff. tom. i. p. 98.

traced upon his soul. In accordance with this principle we find Elihu in the book of Job, after speaking of himself as in possession of a wisdom independent of experience, alleging, in order to explain his assertion, that "there is a Spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding⁸." That is to say, the imparted Logos, "the light that lighteth every man," was in his case, if he spoke truly, brought into effectual action by "the Spirit that quickens," and thus enabled to display itself in words full of spiritual wisdom. In the later Hebrew Scriptures this gift is represented with equal clearness, as proceeding immediately from God to the individual whom He vouchsafes to teach; "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God; for the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding⁹." That the knowledge of God could not be attained but through such inspiration was also the confession of the Jewish Church when drawing nearer to its end; as may be gathered from the book of Wisdom; "Thy counsel who hath known, except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above¹?" Or from the same language in the works of Philo, "How would the soul have perceived God, if He had not inspired it and come in contact with it as much as might be²?"

⁸ Job xxxii. 8.

⁹ Prov. ii. 5, 6.

¹ Wisd. ix. 17.

² Leg. Alleg. l. i. p. 142.

And here again we find our conclusion forestalled and confirmed by early Christian writers. Thus while S. Justin teaches that men were enabled through their participation of the Divine Logos to "see that which is akin to it³," his pupil Tatian, ascribing the effect to its immediate or efficient cause, affirms that "the souls that were obedient to wisdom attracted to themselves a kindred Spirit⁴," which Spirit he teaches us to regard as the source of spiritual wisdom. It should be carefully observed that this writer professes to be giving the opinions of the whole Christian body. Still more distinctly is it declared by S. Clemens of Alexandria, that Plato and many others were indebted to Divine inspiration for whatever they apprehended of the truth⁵.

We conclude therefore that even in the heathen, that moral state which admits and promotes a willingness to be conformed to the internal type of truth impressed on the soul from the beginning, is attended by an illuminating influence of the Spirit of truth, by whom a living light is thrown upon the great object of contemplation and inquiry, and the power given to realize its character and presence.

6. It may perhaps be thought that some of those

³ Ap. ii. c. 13.

⁴ c. Græc. p. 153.

⁵ Adm. ad Gent. p. 46 C. τὸν ἕνα ὄντως μόνον Θεόν, ἀναφθεγγομένους Θεὸν, κατ' ἐπίπνοιαν αὐτοῦ, εἴ που τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιδράζουσιν.—Sim. 47 C.

ancient writers, to whom reference has been made, were inclined to overrate the good which remains in the unregenerate, and, in particular, the actual moral excellence or wisdom of a few philosophers; and it might further be inferred that, as a necessary consequence, they were disposed to undervalue their own Christian privileges. The premises and the conclusion would be equally unjust. The Fathers certainly do state the fact, that man was not entirely forsaken by his Maker; but they also state, with much greater emphasis and frequency, his utter insufficiency to fulfil the higher purposes for which he was created. S. Justin, for example, asserts that the very best of the philosophers were able to attain to nothing more than an obscure and faint perception of the truth; and expressly points out the wide distinction between a *seed*, a *portion*, or a *copy*, of the Word which He assigns to all mankind, and that union with Him in all fulness, power, and truth, which is the privilege of the regenerate⁶. In the same spirit S. Clemens, though dwelling largely upon God's goodness to the Gentiles, will go no further than to allow that the Greeks had at most "some sparks left of the Divine Word," and gave utterance to "a few fragments of the truth⁷;" while he describes Christians as "bearing about with them the image of God, an image which dwells,

⁶ Ap. ii. cc. 8. 13.

⁷ Adm. ad Gent. p. 49 A.

takes counsel, converses with them, sharing their common life, and partaking of their feelings ⁸.” It must be acknowledged also that those authors against whom this suspicion would be most likely to arise are found to dwell, as fully and frequently as any others, on the universal prevalence of vice and error among all classes in the heathen world, and to contrast, as feelingly as any, their state of misery and darkness with the enlightened hope and joy and peace which are the blessed lot of the believer in the Gospel ⁹.

A strong confirmation, and therefore an apt conclusion, to the foregoing remarks upon the spiritual and moral condition of the unrenewed man is furnished by a synodical decree of our own Church, in which every particular of the doctrine here set forth is unavoidably implied, and from which it may be readily deduced. “If any man shall affirm either that during the continuance of the old Testament the merits of Christ’s death actually to come were not sufficient to save all true believers; or that there was then no Catholic Church; or that at any time there was any other rock but Jesus Christ, the

⁸ Ib. p. 40 A.

⁹ Just. M. Ap. I. cc. 14—17, 25 &c. Orat. ad Græc. c. v. Πανταχούθεν τοίνυν εἰδέναι προσήκει, ὅτι οὐδαμῶς ἑτέρως περὶ Θεοῦ ἢ τῆς ὀρθῆς θεοσεβείας μανθάνειν οἶόν τε, ἢ παρὰ τῶν προφητῶν μόνον τῶν διὰ τῆς θείας ἐπιπνοίας διδασκόντων ὑμᾶς. Cohort. in fin.—See S. Clem. Al. Admon. ad Gent. throughout, but especially pp. 53—56; 73—76.

blessed seed, upon whom the Catholic Church was then built; or that many of the Gentiles were not always, for aught that is known to the contrary, true members of the Catholic Church; . . . he doth greatly err¹."

II. In speaking of the state of fallen man, we have hitherto made express mention of the Gentiles only. It may be necessary to explain that this has not been done from an opinion that the Jews are in any sense to be excluded from the application of the principles which have been laid down. On the contrary, it does not appear that the children of Israel, as such, had any direct and special gift of the Spirit by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles, and therefore the state of both may be collected from the same passages of Scripture, and inferred from the same general arguments. Since, however, this is a fact of too much importance to our investigation to be assumed or granted without proof, it is desirable that we should exhibit briefly some of the many grounds on which it rests.

1. It is repeatedly assumed in the New Testament that no promise of spiritual assistance accompanied the promulgation of the Law in Horeb. To this effect, for instance, is the statement of S. Paul, that the law was not able to destroy sin, because it was

¹ Overall's Convocation Book, b. I. Can. 36. Compare Ch. xxxvi. preceding this Canon. See S. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. xviii. c. 47.

“weak through the flesh ²,” in which representation we find a key to the meaning of those frequent allusions or declarations, in which the Apostle contrasts the efficacy of the faith which is in Jesus Christ with the insufficiency of the more ancient covenant. The Evangelist S. John, at the commencement of his narrative, opposes the Law to the Gospel upon the very same grounds; with a view, we may suppose, of engaging the interest of the reader in the account which follows. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ ³.” In all this, however, the teaching of the Apostles had been anticipated by the mediator of the Law himself, when, standing on the borders of Canaan, he reminded the people that they had received no special help to facilitate the observance of the Law during the time of their wandering in the wilderness: “The Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day ⁴.” At this time, however, God made with them another covenant, or, rather, as it is clearly intimated by Moses, He renewed with them the covenant made many years before with their father Abraham; and this second compact, it must be observed, does carry with it a peculiar promise of Divine grace: “The Lord thy

² Rom. viii. 3.

³ Joh. i. 17.

⁴ Deut. xxix. 4. See vv. 1. 13.

God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live ⁵." But at the same time the fulfilment of this promise is, by an express intimation, reserved for a period when the nation shall have run through many vicissitudes of disobedience and repentance, of disaster and prosperity. It is well known that the Jewish commentators believed these words to be descriptive of the spiritual blessings which should attend the manifestation of the Messiah ⁶. In the Epistle to the Romans, S. Paul cites a portion of the address delivered by Moses on this occasion, with express reference to the new covenant in Christ, and, assuming "the righteousness which is of faith" to speak in those words, contrasts them with the language in which "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law." The promise of Divine assistance in the keeping of the Law was repeated by some of the later Prophets, and their words also are recognised in the Christian Scriptures as relating to that "better covenant which was established upon better promises ⁷." And while no other privilege ever offered or imparted to the Jewish nation can

⁵ Deut. xxx. 6. Compare vv. 11—14 with Rom. x. 5—10.

⁶ See Bull. Harm. Apost. Diss. ii. c. 11, § 3.

⁷ Jer. xxxi. 31 ; Ezek. xi. 19 ; xxxvi. 26. Compare Heb. viii. 8—13. See S. Chrys. Hom. i. (Proœm.) in Mat. Ed. Field. tom. i. pp. 1—3.

even make a show of accomplishing the predictions of Moses and the Prophets, they find an exact counterpart in that which we believe to be the great and distinguishing benefit of the more perfect dispensation. The Gospel came not in word only but in power, being preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven⁸." "By the new covenant the Law of God is written in the hearts of the faithful which by the old was written on the tablets of stone⁹." And from its introduction children have been raised up to Abraham, who are by nature strangers in his inheritance, but by their lives of faith and love, proclaim themselves to be of the true "circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus¹."

It is clear, then, that it was no part of the office of the Law to confer the special gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; but there remains another supposition which would still create a fundamental difference in the spiritual condition of the Jew and Gentile. It might possibly be conjectured that, when God made choice of one nation to be His instrument for the more extensive and effectual distribution of His grace at some future time, He would withdraw from the rest of mankind that scanty measure of assistance which had till then remained to them. But it will be remembered

⁸ 1 Pet. i. 12.

⁹ S. Aug. de Sp. et Lit. c. xxviii.

¹ Phil. iii. 3. Rom. ii. 29; iv. 11, 12. Col. ii. 11—13.

that our former conclusions applied to the spiritual state of the human race in general, as well *after* as before the election of the seed of Abraham; and that they disproved, at least, the entire withdrawal of the Divine help and mercy. Moreover, that supposition would be at variance with all that is expressly told us of the conditions upon which the grace of God is granted or withheld. Nor could it be made to agree with the account given by S. Paul of the grounds of Jewish superiority: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God²." He affirms that the possession of the Holy Scriptures was the chief privilege of Israel; and thereby precludes a greater gift of grace and illumination; for the Law of Moses and the instructions of the Prophets are not to be compared in dignity or value to the present, living, influence of the Spirit of God, without whom the written word can neither be obeyed or understood. If the Spirit of grace and knowledge had been vouchsafed to the chosen people, as such, while withheld from the less favoured Gentiles, that gift would have been their distinctive, as well as their most blessed and most glorious privilege.

² Rom. iii. 1, 2.

2. But although the spiritual state of all men was intrinsically the same, and irrespective of the outward circumstances of the individual; yet *indirectly*, the descendant of Abraham, as the chosen guardian of the Divine oracles, enjoyed a certain prerogative of strengthening and illuminating grace. He was in possession of a greater body of objective truth, and a more certain knowledge of the will of God. Owing to this advantage, there was, among the people at large, a less general and less flagrant violation of the moral law; while in individuals of that nation were found the only examples of true sanctity and pure virtue, which shine out in the dark waste of history before the Christian era. But, according to a fixed rule in the moral government of mankind, more devoted obedience to the will of God, and more earnest meditation upon His works and attributes, would always be rewarded by a larger measure of the enlightening Spirit, that the saint might advance in knowledge as he grew in grace. Therefore the secret gift of spiritual wisdom is truly represented as giving a brighter light among the favoured tribes of Israel than in the other nations of the earth. "The Creator of all things gave unto Wisdom a commandment, and He that made her caused her tabernacle to rest, and said, Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thine inheritance in Israel." "In the

holy tabernacle she served before Him, and so was she established in Zion³.”

But if we allow that the children of Israel were once in advance of the rest of mankind, in this as well as in other respects, we must, on the other hand, infer from the analogy of God's dealing with others, whether individuals or nations, that the great crime of rejecting and crucifying the Son of God would not merely deprive the unbelieving portion of the people of their superiority, but leave them more destitute of the gifts of the Spirit than if they had never enjoyed the privileges which they so fatally abused. In this manner we interpret the warning given to the nation in our Lord's parable of the relapsed demoniac. Referring first to their fast-waning day of privilege and opportunity, and then to their impending rejection, He seems to say of them: As long as they remain God's people, “even if they fall into sin, they have among them those who can bring them back, they have the providence of God and the grace of the Spirit;” but after their rejection, “they will entirely be deprived of His protecting care, so that virtue will be more scarce and calamity more aggravated, and evil spirits will exercise a greater tyranny over them⁴.” Such a destitution of Divine grace, in its last, worst form of hopeless punish-

³ Ecclus. xxiv. 8. 10.

⁴ S. Chrys. Hom. xliii. in Matt. xii. 43—45.

ment, He denounced against those who sought by blasphemous falsehood to destroy the testimony which His mighty works afforded to His character and nature. When certain Pharisees asserted that His miracles were wrought by the aid of unclean spirits, He spoke of their sin as blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and declared that it should never be forgiven⁵. Nor can we deny that the anticipations excited by His words have been accomplished. It is too evident that "even to this day the veil is upon their hearts⁶;" or whence that wonderful insensibility to Divine things which is the chief characteristic of the dispersed tribes of Israel? Notwithstanding, to exclude them altogether from the effectual operation of Divine grace, would be to exclude them from the possibility of repentance, and we know that a time is coming when "the veil shall be taken away," "that they also may obtain mercy⁷." The little fire still smoulders in the smoking flax; "the Spirit has not been wholly withdrawn from among the remnants of their ancient grace⁸;" and whenever it shall please God to give them repentance unto life, we trust to see their "light again break forth as the morning," and "shine more and more unto the perfect day."

We conclude, therefore, that both Jew and

⁵ Matt. xii. 22—32. Compare Mark iii. 30.

⁶ 2 Cor. iii. 15.

⁷ Rom. xi. 31.

⁸ S. Hilar. in Matt. xii. 20.

Gentile, however fallen from the pristine dignity of man, retain, as an inalienable birthright, some portion of that "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The truth must be acknowledged without mistrust or hesitation, even if, in the infirmity of our nature, we feel the difficulty of stating it so as not to exaggerate the assistance thus afforded to mankind. By way of caution let it suffice to say, that its office is rather to warn against error than to lead into truth; that it is no substitute for revelation, to the necessity of which its existence is the most powerful testimony: and that it cannot enable any man to dispense with the devout reception and continued use of those ordained means of grace and knowledge which it may please God to place within his reach. On the other hand, we should be guilty of profane ingratitude, if we ventured to depreciate a gift of God, which, however lessened in value through the fault of man, has yet been found in every age and nation to shine with an ever-growing brightness on those who have walked by its light, and to shed peace and consolation on the rugged path of duty and obedience; we should be hindering the fulfilment of God's gracious purpose and of our own prayers, if we were to forget that it is only through this medium of perception and intelligence, that the unregenerate can be brought into that state of grace, in which he may be enabled to discern more

clearly the eternal beauty of Divine and moral truth. Rather, let it be our part to thank and praise the Author and Giver of all good, when we are taught to see that, among all the scattered tribes of our degenerate and sinful race, a wisdom, built consciously on some implanted truth, has always been accessible to faith and striving. For it is not a Christian thought, to ascribe this best possession of the soul, as some ancient moralists have done, to the blind benefit of a more happy nature, or to esteem it only the slow growth of traditional experience, or the result of merely human meditation, exercised on providential intimations of the unseen and future; but we are bound to regard it as the gift and inspiration of the Almighty, ever present by His Spirit to those whom He has formed in His own image, "to lead them forth into the land of righteousness," and to give them "understanding, that they may keep His laws."

Thus the mercy of God is shown to be over all His works: thus He realizes to the soul of man the teaching of that visible emblem by which He daily announces to the whole world His attributes of power and bounty. "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and His circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof⁹."

⁹ Ps. xix. 6. It gives additional interest to this inquiry, if it does not tend to strengthen our conclusions, to find statements in

heathen writers in apparent harmony with the doctrine of Holy Scripture. In estimating the value of such examples as those which are subjoined, we should bear in mind that it is often difficult to ascertain with precision what those authors actually meant by language which is capable of a Christian interpretation; and that, at all events, they seldom meant quite all that *we* should mean by the same words. It is enough for our present purpose, however, that there should be some approximation to a Christian sense. (1.) We frequently find the capacity of intellectual and moral excellence ascribed, under different forms of expression, to the power and goodness of God: thus, Heraclitus taught that, if the human mind is to be exercised to good purpose, "it must be strengthened by that which is common to all; for," continues he, "all human minds are nourished by the one Divine Mind."—In Stobæ. Serm. iii. It was a favourite theme with Plato that "virtue is neither from nature nor learning, but is the gift of God." This is the subject of the Meno, Bekk. II. i. 389. His opinion is recognised by Justin M. as falling in with Christian truth. Cohort. ad Græc. § 32. Sim. S. Clem. Al. Strom. I. v. p. 538 C. This was also the doctrine of the Stoics, who shared with the Socratic school both the hatred of the vulgar heathen and the respect of the Christian philosopher: (see Just. M. Ap. ii. c. 8.) "Whence," demands Balbus in Cicero, "whence proceed the intelligence, the honour, the virtue, the harmony found in mankind, if they flowed not from the gods above?"—De Nat. Deor. I. ii. c. 31. Sim. c. 6. This sentiment was adopted by Cicero himself: thus, De Leg. I. i. c. 22: "Self-knowledge will first teach a man that he has something divine, and lead him to look upon the intelligent principle within him as a consecrated thing, like an image, as it were." Sim. Seneca: "No one can be a good man without God."—Ep. xli. See also lxxiii. and lxxxiii. S. Augustine represents all the more excellent philosophers, and in particular Plotinus, as teaching that God is the light of the soul, enlightened by Whom it enjoys the light of reason. De Civ. Dei, I. x. c. 2. (2.) Particular kinds of excellence are sometimes specified by the more religious of the philosophers.

Thus, Plato speaks of "the genuine love of genuine philosophy" as proceeding "from a certain divine inspiration."—De Republ. l. vi. III. i. 302. This principle he applies to political wisdom; III. iii. 309, &c.; to the intellectual pursuits of Isocrates; Phædr. sub fin.; to his own aptitude for teaching youth; Theæt. sub fin.—See Meno II. i. 388. Sim. Cicero affirms that the Poet, the Orator, and, above all, the Philosopher, are indebted to Divine assistance—Quæst. Tusc. i. 26. (3.) Of the use of the phrase, "Divine inspiration," an instance has been given: sometimes they speak of a *spirit* that dwells in man: thus in the Axiochus, it is said that man would never have been capable of what he is, εἰ μὴ τι θεῖον ὄντως ἐν ἡν πνεῦμα τῇ ψυχῇ—Plat. Opp. III. iii. 514. Sim. Seneca: "God is near thee; with thee; in thee. Yes, a holy spirit dwells within us."—Ep. xli. (4.) We observe a further resemblance to Christian language, and *possibly* to Christian doctrine, when man is said to be a partaker of the Word or Reason of God: thus Heraclitus speaks of that "Universal and Divine Reason by partaking of which we become rational."—Cited by Sext. Phil. See the Varior. Notes to S. Clem. Al. Strom. v. p. 602, ed. Sylb. Sim. Epicharmus in S. Clem. Al.: "Human Reason springs from the Divine."—Strom. v. p. 605. (5.) There is yet another coincidence when the superior principle in man is said to be an image of God, or good men are said to resemble Him. The virtuous man is described by Plato as "practising virtue that he may be conformed to God as far as it is possible for man."—De Republ. x. III. i. 500; Theæt. II. i. 247. The Epicureans taught that men were prompted to a belief in God by innate conceptions of His nature which correspond to it as an impressed image corresponds to that which impresses it: "Deus ille, quem mente noscimus, atque in animi notione, *tanquam in vestigio*, volumus reponere."—Cic. De Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 14. "The human mind," says Cicero, "being derived (*decerptus*) from the Divine, can be compared, if it is lawful to say so, with none other than God Himself."—Quæst. Tusc. l. v. c. 13. Comp. Plat. Phæd. II. iii. 50. (6.) The principle that the spiritual only discern spiritual things (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15) is

included in the Pythagorean dogma, ὅμοια ὁμοίοις γινώσκεισθαι, of which traces may be found in Plato ; as, when he says that the superior principle in man, πρὸς τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ συγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἶρειν, ὡς ὄντας φύτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλ' οὐράνιον. —Timæ. III. ii. 137, 138. Similarly, De Republ. III. i. 285. (7.) Sometimes we find it said that the degeneracy of man has been attended by a withdrawal of that which was Divine in him. Thus, in the fable of Atlantis in the Critias, we are told that its inhabitants possessed at first Θεοῦ μοῖρα or θεία φύσις, before the loss of which they were obedient to the laws, and well-disposed, πρὸς τὸ συγγενὲς θεῶν.—III. ii. 172, 173. Sim. Seneca, Ep. xci. A more important resemblance is to be observed, when moral excellence is made to depend upon the practical habits of the individual, as in that principle of Aristotle ; ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐνεργειῶν αἱ ἔξεις γίνονται. Eth. Nic. I. II. c. i. § 6 (sim. Plotin. Enn. i. l. 3, Oxf. vol. i. p. 45), especially when this is taught in connexion with the doctrine that man is partaker of a Divine nature ; as in that of Seneca ; Ep. lxxiii.—“Seeds of Divinity have been sown in the bodies of men, which come up similar to their original, if they meet with the care of a good husbandman ;” or, as in the following words from a lost work of Cicero, which is of great interest from having given to S. Augustine his first lasting impressions respecting the great end of life : “If our souls are eternal and Divine, as is thought by the greatest and by far the most illustrious of the ancient philosophers, we must conclude that the more constantly they have been exercised in their peculiar province, *i. e.* in reasoning and earnest investigation, and the less they have been mixed up with and entangled in the vices and delusions of the world, the easier will be their ascent and return to heaven.”—Hortensius, in S. Aug. de Trin. l. xiv. c. 19. See his Conf. l. iii. § 4.

CHAPTER IX.

It has been shown that conformity to the Divine Word, the Son of God, and a participation of the co-equal Spirit, were essential constituents of the original perfection of human nature. We have also seen reason to conclude that, however far below the complete excellence and glorious beauty of uncorrupted nature the race of Adam may have fallen, the Divine lineaments, which were impressed on the first human pair, have not been entirely effaced, and that the light of the Spirit, which was given to be their safeguard, has not been utterly extinguished. Even in the worst estate of heathenism the soul of man has that within it which has no correlative in the material and visible creation. He has desires which meet with no satisfaction here, and hopes which cannot define their own object. He feels that he is not what he was designed to be, and he longs, or perhaps even strives in darkness and perplexity, to ascend whence he has fallen. He has capacity to conceive and to desire, however feebly, the recovery of the lost robe of righteous-

ness. He can propose to himself, at least, to search with reverence into “the deep things of God,” and the great mysteries of Providence and nature,—and to enjoy the visible and present, without neglecting to live chiefly for the unseen and future. The “scribe who is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,” and therefore conversant with truth, both “new and old,” will never despise these feelings and aspirations as the natural wild growth of the enthusiastic mind, or the half-reasoned conclusion of an imaginative philosophy. He will hear in them the voice of “all creation groaning and travailing in pain together,” as it “waits for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body¹,” and he will see in them at once the basis of all true piety and personal religion, and, therefore, the occasion also of all superstition and fanaticism.

I. Now if we inquire how the Saviour of mankind has provided for the satisfaction of these wants, and for the strengthening and due guidance of these powers of corrupt nature, we learn that it is the revealed object of His dispensation to build up that which has fallen, and to recover that which is lost; to “give to as many as receive Him the privilege of becoming the sons of God²;” that, having thus regained by adoption the forfeited birthright of their race, they may attain after this life to that

¹ Rom. viii. 22.

² Joh. i. 12.

state of bliss and glory to which the first parents and representatives of the whole family would have been translated, if they had not allowed themselves to be seduced into transgression.

The restoration of man to the primitive condition of humanity, is sometimes described as a recovery of the faded features of the Divine similitude; sometimes, as the effect of the regenerative influence of the indwelling Spirit, and often, more completely, as the work of that Spirit transforming the soul into the same image of Divinity in which it was originally created. Although more is expressed in one of these statements than in the rest, yet the same truths are unavoidably implied in all, for man cannot resemble God but by the operation of the Spirit of God, nor can he be governed by the Spirit without growing into conformity with God. When, therefore, we undertake to show that the great object of the work of Christ is properly described as the restoration of our fallen nature, it will be only requisite to prove that the gift of the Holy Ghost is the distinguishing blessing of His covenant. It is expedient, therefore, that we should first address ourselves to the exposition of this single principle, only premising that its connexion with the other portions of the great scheme of doctrine, now before us, will become more evident as we proceed in our investigation.

1. The prophetic announcement of the Gospel

was not made without a distinct promise of its being accompanied by the special gift of the indwelling Spirit. Thus in the book of Isaiah is recorded the following declaration of the Almighty: "Fear not, O Jacob, My servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring³." In the prophet Jeremiah a greater knowledge of God and greater power to obey him—both gifts of the Spirit—are expressly represented as privileges of the New Covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord⁴." A few years later, in a revelation made to Ezekiel, these blessings were directly ascribed to the renewing influence of the Holy Ghost: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you: and I

³ Is. xliv. 2, 3.⁴ Jer. xxxi. 31, 33, 34.

will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you ⁵." In the book of Psalms we find petitions in which the writer appears to anticipate the times of Christian privilege by a direct prayer for the assistance of the Holy Ghost, which by implication he confesses to be essential to the formation of an upright and holy character: "Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness ⁶." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me ⁷."

2. In accordance with the prophetical outline of His work, our Lord Himself was wont to represent the kingdom which He was about to establish among men as being, in an especial manner, an institution of the Spirit. Thus He declared that admission to its privileges can only be obtained through Him: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ⁸." The Baptist had to the same purpose announced before that the disciples of Christ should be initiated through the Spirit: "I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you

⁵ Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

⁶ Ps. cxliii. 10.

⁷ Ps. li. 10, 11.

⁸ Joh. iii. 5.

with the Holy Ghost⁹." Our Lord ascribed the power and efficacy of the truths which He taught to the operation of the same Living Principle: "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life¹." He also gave a general description of the New Covenant, as an ordinance of spiritual worship: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth²." Agreeably to these intimations, He encouraged men to pray for and to expect the assistance of the Spirit long before any clear explanation of His nature or His office was vouchsafed. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him³?" And when the time of His departure drew nigh, in pursuance of these previous disclosures, He foretold an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost, as the sequel and completion of His work on earth: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth⁴."

3. It is a necessary inference from this manner of speaking, that the Spirit should be given by Christ, in measure at least, as He was not given before He came. And this conclusion is sustained,

⁹ Mark i. 8.¹ Joh. vi. 63.² Ib. iv. 23.³ Luke xi. 13.⁴ Joh. xiv. 16, 17.

both by express statements of the Apostles and by the universal tenor of their writings. Thus, when our Lord appropriates to Himself the prophecy of Isaiah already cited, by an allusion conveyed in the same figurative language, the Evangelist observes, by way of explanation, "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified ⁵." When the "promise of the Father" had been fulfilled by the miraculous effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the followers of Christ were become in the language of S. Paul, when viewed collectively, "a habitation of God through the Spirit ⁶;" and, when regarded one by one, "temples of the Holy Ghost ⁷." And because it is the office of those who "labour in the word" to introduce men to this glorious privilege, the same Apostle terms the ministry of the Gospel a "ministry of the Spirit," and contrasts it under that name with the "ministry of death and condemnation" in the older covenant ⁸. The pre-eminent nature of the Christian gift appears also in that implied comparison of S. Peter, who, after speaking of the Spirit of Christ which was in the Prophets, the most highly favoured subjects of the ancient law, proceeds to characterize

⁵ Joh. vii. 39.

⁶ Eph. ii. 22.

⁷ 1 Cor. vi. 19; iii. 16.

⁸ 2 Cor. iii. 6—9.

the Christian dispensation as the Gospel preached unto men "with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven⁹;" in which few words he seems distinctly to recognise the special manner and abundant measure in which He is vouchsafed through Christ.

II. Not content with these general statements, the inspired writers make frequent mention of certain special effects which result, as by a necessary law, from the presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man. Of these we will select for notice such as have the most direct bearing upon our subject.

1. S. Peter declares the end of the exceeding great and precious promises of Christ to be, that His disciples should become "partakers of the Divine nature¹." Receiving the Spirit of God, they recover, by His agency, that union with God, and consequent resemblance to Him, which they both received and lost in their first parents. Hence also the Gospel gift is sometimes represented as the restoration and potential development of the Divine image. For instance; those who have "learned Christ" aright are exhorted in these terms: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which *after God* is created in righteousness and true holiness²." Elsewhere the Christian is addressed as one who has "put on the new man,

⁹ 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

¹ 2 Pet. i. 4.

² Eph. iv. 23, 24.

which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him ³.”

2. With equal distinctness are we taught that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is the Archetype of our renewal, as He was of our original creation. Thus S. Paul reminds the Galatians that “as many of them as had been baptized into Christ had put on Christ ⁴,” and that the great object of his toil and anxiety with respect to them was that “Christ might be formed in them ⁵.” The resemblance of the Christian to Christ is moreover inferred from all those sayings of the inspired Word in which he is represented as a member of His body mystical. An union with Him, which could be fitly so described, seems of necessity to imply a conformity to Him, especially when viewed in the light of that great principle enunciated by S. Paul ; “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit ⁶.” It should be observed also, that our restoration after the image of God, which is His Son, is implied in the very notion of our sonship by adoption ; and this connexion is also expressly recognised in Holy Scripture. Thus S. Paul speaks of the eternal purpose of God, that, in the dispensation of renewal, those who participate in its privileges should be “conformed to the image of His Son, that He

³ Col. iii. 10.

⁵ Gal. iv. 19.

⁴ Gal. iii. 27.

⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 17.

might be the First-born among many brethren ⁷." And to the same effect is that devout forecasting of the end which filled the heart and mind of the beloved disciple: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is ⁸." And here we are reminded that in this life the redeemed of Christ only begin to grow into a resemblance to the Divine Archetype of their new birth. Their complete investiture with the similitude of God, a gift more glorious than that which Adam lost, is reserved for "the times of restitution of all things." It will be then, according to the Scriptures, that "as we have borne the image of the earthy Adam, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly ⁹;" not bear it, as heretofore, impressed only upon the hidden substance of the soul, but beaming with a visible beauty through its outward veil, our very bodies being "fashioned like unto His glorious Body ¹."

It has been already said that the assimilation of man to God must be ascribed to the ever-active though secret agency of the indwelling Spirit; but it was not thought necessary to bring forward a direct scriptural proof in confirmation of a truth so obvious and undeniable. If such should be

⁷ Rom. viii. 29.

⁸ 1 Joh. iii. 2.

⁹ 1 Cor. xv. 49.

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

required, however, it would be sufficient to refer to the fact already established—that the restoration of man is a restoration to the likeness of the Son ; and with the scriptural statements of this doctrine to compare those numerous passages in which the regeneration, adoption, and renewal of the redeemed are referred to the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. S. Paul, however, enables us to speak with equal decision, and more brevity, when he asserts, in such terms as the following, the present privilege and future glory of those who are the sons of God in Christ : “ We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord ².”

III. The testimony borne by Holy Scripture to these several points of doctrine is so clear and explicit, that we have not here the same occasion to inquire how it was understood in the first ages of the Gospel, as when we investigated the state of man during the brief period of his innocence. Nevertheless, our rapid survey of the grounds on which these principles have been asserted will be more complete and satisfactory, if it be shown, in aid, that the restoration of the pristine integrity of man, by the reproduction in his soul of the Divine similitude through the effectual working of the in-

² 2 Cor. iii. 18.

dwelling Spirit, was a mode of viewing the work of Christ in man most familiar to the great doctors of the undivided and uncorrupted Church.

1. It will be readily understood that those writers would at different times have occasion to refer to different portions of the doctrine under consideration, or to present it in different points of view, as they were led by the subject upon which they were immediately engaged. Hence we not unfrequently find them speaking of the salvation of man as a restoration of that which was decayed or lost, without explaining at large either the nature of man's loss, or the agency employed in its recovery. Thus, Justin Martyr briefly describes the end of the incarnation and teaching of Christ to be, "the reformation and recovery of the human race³." To the same effect, but at greater length, are these words of S. Clemens: "Instruction moulds and regulates man, and thus gives him a new nature. And the result is the same as in his natural formation: but of both these benefits the Lord is the author; of the one when He created man; of the other when He creates him again, and renews him according to the Covenant⁴." In terms equally general, but with the same reference to the work of Christ, S. Augustine thus descants on the nature of evil, and the mode of

³ Ap. i. c. 23.

⁴ Strom. l. iv. p. 534 B.

its removal: "Evil things cannot exist without good, for the natures of which they are an accident are in themselves, as natures, good. And evil is removed, not by taking away a nature, or part of a nature, which had become united to the original good, but by healing and correcting that which had been vitiated and depraved⁵." To the same purpose, he declares that Christ died in order that "the nature which was undone through Adam might be restored through Him⁶." A little after we find the teaching of this great master in Israel repeated and sustained by his disciple Prosper: "The nature of man may be restored to its form by Him who gave that form, and it is capable of those good things which it possessed before, that, through the Mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ, it may recover what it lost⁷." Another writer, of the same age and school, thus states the same great principle: "Man is not remodelled or created over again; no other substance is created in him, but that substance which had been injured is repaired: and the only thing taken away from him is the fault from which his nature was at first exempt⁸." "The only-begotten Word of God," says S. Cyril of Alexandria, "restoring human nature to its pristine state, hath abolished

⁵ De Civ Dei, l. xiv. c. 11.

⁶ De Grat. et Lib. Arb. c. xxv.

⁷ C. Cass. Coll. c. xxvii. p. 125 D. ⁸ De Voc. Gent. l. i. c. 7.

sin in the flesh by becoming man ; and, translating us into a newness of life, gives us a charge to recover the original dignity of our nature⁹.” “We ought particularly to note this,” observes Fulgentius, “that the Son was made ‘the beginning of the creation,’ not that He might build again a new creation, but that He might renew the old, which had been ruined in time past¹.”

2. If we proceed to ask what is that specific constituent of human perfection which is restored or renovated through the Gospel, we are informed, by the consentient voice of ancient Christendom, that it is the image of God, in which the first man was created. Thus, for example, it is affirmed by S. Irenæus, that the Son of God was incarnate, and became man, “that we might regain in Christ Jesus that which we had lost in Adam, namely, the being after the image and similitude of God².” S. Augustine says, to the same effect, that “the image of God, which impiety had not wholly effaced, is renewed in the mind of believers by the New Testament³.” So S. Prosper describes the new creature in Christ, as “made free from Satan, and become subject to God, reformed from its

⁹ C. Jul. l. iii. p. 92 ; vid. de Ador. in Sp. l. ii. p. 67.

¹ Object. Arian. Discuss. Resp. iii.

² l. iii. c. 20. Sim. l. v. c. 16.

³ De Sp. et Lit. c. 28. Sim. in Joh. c. iii. Tract. x. &c.

disfigurement after the image of Him who created it ⁴.”

3. But we are able to advance still further under the guidance of the early Church; whose teachers ascribe the renovation of the Divine image in the soul to the effectual working of the Holy Ghost. Thus Tertullian says: “Man is by this means restored to God after the likeness of him who had been formerly in the image of God For he recovers that Spirit of God, which he had then received when He breathed upon him, but had lost afterwards through sin ⁵.” “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” says S. Macarius, “for this reason came into the world, that He might change and transform and renew our nature, and create afresh the soul, corrupted by passions owing to the transgression, by uniting it with His own proper Spirit of the Godhead ⁶.” S. Jerome thus comments upon that exhortation of S. Paul, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed:” “We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, that both our spirit and soul may receive the impression of the seal of God, and that we may regain that image and similitude in which we

⁴ Resp. ad Object. Vinc. v. p. 110 A. Sim. de Lib. Arb. p. 101 D.

⁵ De Baptismo, c. v.

⁶ Hom. xlv. Lips. 1714, p. 502.

were originally made⁷." S. Augustine declares, as plainly, that "the work of the Spirit of God is to restore in us that image of God in which we have been created by nature⁸." By S. Cyril of Alexandria we are, in like manner, told that "the Creator of the universe, after bearing with evil a long time, resolved, out of pity, to restore human nature to its original image through the Spirit; for in no other way was it possible for the Divine lineaments to shine out again as they had done before⁹."

4. In the renewal of the Divine similitude in man, according to its expression in God the Son, is implied the re-adoption of mankind into the family of God. This consequence is also recognised in the deep and comprehensive teaching of the Fathers. To give a single instance from S. Basil: "The dispensation of our God and Saviour, with respect to man, is a recall of him from the state into which he fell, and a return to familiar relations with God from the alienation incurred by his disobedience. To this end were the sojourn of Christ with flesh, the examples of evangelical living, His sufferings, His cross, His burial, His resurrection, that the man who is saved through

⁷ S. Hieron. in loc. (Eph. iv. 30.)

⁸ De Sp. et Lit. c. xxvii.

⁹ In Joh. i. 32; Sim. in Is. xlv. 21; in Joh. vii. 39; xiv. 20, &c.

imitation of Christ may recover that ancient adoption of sonship¹."

5. It was also a part of their teaching, that resemblance to the Son, as He appeared in the days of His humiliation, is a necessary condition and an earnest of our future assimilation to Him in glory; in other words, that the moral and spiritual state of man in heaven will be but the maturity and full development of that which he becomes in this life. For example, S. Cyprian urges on his flock, that "we cannot bear the image of the Heavenly Adam, unless we exhibit the likeness of Christ in that which we have already begun to be²." Or, to take another instance from the writings of S. Augustine: "The complete adoption of sons will take place when our body too shall be redeemed. Now we have both begun to be like Him, having the first-fruits of the Spirit, and are still unlike Him, through the remains of the old man. Accordingly, as far as we are like Him, so far, by the Spirit regenerating us, are we the sons of God; but, as far as we are unlike, are we the sons of the flesh, and of the world³." And here we may observe, that, inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is the Divine agent in the renewal and sanctification of mankind, the advance from incipient life in Christ

¹ De Spir. Sanct. c. xxxv.

² De Zel. et Liv. c. iii.

³ De Pecc. Mer. et Remed. l. ii. c. 10.

to the stature of His fulness, as here described, is also evidently implied whenever we are told to expect a final and more abundant effusion of the Spirit as the crown and completion of that which has already been vouchsafed: as, for example, when S. Augustine infers from S. Paul's assertion that God "hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," that we are to understand that the fulness of the Spirit is reserved for us in another life ⁴.

6. In the following sentence from S. Cyril, a more complete view of the doctrine under consideration is obtained by the combination of its several constituent truths; namely, that the glory and perfection of human nature in its created type consisted in its conformity to God the Son; that this conformity was wrought in man by the indwelling Spirit; and that the restoration of this image of God by the same Spirit is the great gift of the Gospel. "After human nature has been forsaken by the Holy Ghost, whose power could keep and fashion us after the Divine character, this grace is again conferred on us by the Saviour, who brings us back to the original dignity of our nature, and reforms in us the image of Himself ⁵."

IV. From this more general description of the

⁴ In Joh. Ev. Tract. xcvi. See 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5.

⁵ In Joh. vii. 39, l. v. c. 2, p. 474. The controversy in which S. Cyril was engaged respecting the two natures in Christ appears to have particularly directed his attention to the doc-

state of man as renewed in Christ, we now descend to the consideration of those particular attributes which are the especial subject of our inquiry.

1. It has been shown that Adam was originally endowed with moral sensibilities and a capacity for Divine knowledge, through his participation of, and conformity to, the Essential Word of God; and further, that, whatever injury he suffered at the Fall, those lineaments of the Divine image were not altogether effaced either in him or in his descendants. Since, therefore, there is, as we have shown, in the dispensation of our redemption, no fundamental change in the substance or laws of human nature, but man is “renewed after the image of Him that created him;” we infer that the gifts of spiritual and moral discernment are faculties of man regenerate, as they were, beyond question, of man innocent. In accordance with this conclusion, when our Lord announced the coming of the Comforter, He expressly declared that these blessings should flow from His presence among men: “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth⁶.” And, lest it should be thought that the illumination of which He then spake, was to be vouchsafed exclu-

trines which have been here investigated.—See especially l. ix. throughout, and l. xi. c. 11 of the Commentary on the Gospel of S. John.

⁶ Joh. xvi. 13.

sively to the Apostles and those who should share their office and authority, we are taught elsewhere by the Evangelist who has recorded the promise, that every Christian is, in his measure and degree, blest with a part in its fulfilment. For we find him, about sixty years after the effusion of the Spirit on that great day of Pentecost, thus writing to the whole Church: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things⁷." Nor may we limit the operation of the illuminating Spirit to that brief period of signs and wonders in which they still lived, whose eyes had looked upon and whose hands had touched the Word of Life. When our Lord, after foretelling the advent of the Spirit of truth, prayed for those disciples in whose presence He then stood, that the Father would "sanctify them through His truth," He forthwith added—"neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word⁸." He thus extended the benefit of His intercession and of the promised gift through all time and through every portion of His Church. S. Paul also speaks as if he were enunciating a general principle without limitation by time, office, or other accident, when he affirms, that "he that is spiritual discerneth all things⁹."

We conclude, therefore, that as in former periods

⁷ 1 Joh. ii. 20.

⁸ Joh. xvii. 20.

⁹ 1 Cor. ii. 15.

of the world's history, so now in the days of the Son of Man, that faculty which gives discernment of the truth, both spiritual and moral, and which alone deserves the name of reason, is a participation and a faint copy of the Word of God; and further, that no actual approach to the understanding or the knowledge of the "deep things of God" is possible, unless this faculty be renewed and enlarged by the enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost.

2. We have seen that the doctrine now stated is most clearly revealed in Holy Scripture, and here perhaps it might be left. It will however be more in accordance with our general plan, if we show in a few words that it has a necessary place in that great system of natural and spiritual truths with which we have connected it. "When we assert that the God of the universe is an intelligence, or something beyond intelligence and substance, simple, invisible, and incorporeal; we imply that God is to be comprehended only by him who has been formed after the image of that intelligence¹." To know God, we must be like Him, and therefore man was at the first made, and is now regenerated, in His image². Moreover, because this assimilation of man to God is the proper work of the Spirit of God, therefore it is the Spirit whom we must con-

¹ Orig. c. Cels. l. vii. p. 356.

² See S. Athan. c. Gent. and S. Aug. Tract. i. in Joh. Ev. c. 18 cited in Ch. vii. p. 156, or S. Athan. *ibid.* p. 37 B.

fess as the *immediate* source of light and knowledge to the soul in which He dwells. Other considerations of a similar kind point to Him as their *only* source. Merely human knowledge is derived from external objects, acting, according to their nature, on the perceptive faculties; but it is evident that some other instrumentality must be employed for the acquisition of those ideas which have no corresponding objects within the range of a merely sensuous experience. Now there is but one other source of knowledge which suggests itself as possible; namely, the intercourse of spirits with our spirit. And, here, we may at once exclude the agency of good and evil angels; for it is agreed among those who have paid attention to the subject that they have no power to infuse new ideas into the soul of man³. It remains, therefore, that we ascribe the office to no other than the Spirit of God. To Him also it is by implication exclusively assigned in Holy Scripture; for when we there read, "the things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit of God," we infer that, if any such knowledge has at any time entered into the heart and

³ See the determination of the most eminent of the Schoolmen:—*Dæmones non possunt in nobis excitare cogitationes, . . . nisi earum rerum quarum habemus similitudines, &c.* in Vasquez in pt. I. Disp. ccxviii. cap. 4, t. ii. p. 417. Ed. 1631. The angels are also within the purview of this conclusion, as appears from the former part of the chapter. Sim. S. Jerome on Matt. xv. 19.

mind of man, it must have proceeded from Him, its only natural depository. The method of our redemption proceeded, therefore, in accordance with a necessary and universal law, when the Almighty Father, having sent His Word, the light of men, to them that sat in darkness, sent forth His Spirit also to open their blinded eyes that they might see and rejoice in His light. That which is a proper effect of Divine power could not be wrought by man or angel, and, therefore, "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God ⁴."

⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

CHAPTER X.

SOME allusion has been already made to the condition which it has pleased God to impose on the attainment of religious knowledge ¹; but the subject appears to be of so much importance as to require a more full consideration than our plan has yet allowed us to bestow upon it. To this therefore we propose to devote the following chapter.

I. The knowledge of God and of the things of God is often spoken of as the reward or the effect of obedience to His will. This lesson appears to have been most carefully impressed upon the people of God in every age that witnessed a privileged intercourse between Him and man: a circumstance which is alone sufficient to beget a high sense of its importance. In the book of Job is recorded a traditional expression of it, the origin of which is ascribed to God Himself: "Unto man He said; Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding ²." The same

¹ Ch. vii. p. 153.

² Job xxviii. 28.

principle is inculcated in very similar language both by David and his inspired son ; “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments ³.” Nor was the knowledge of it permitted to escape between the closing of the roll of prophecy and the advent of the Messiah ; for the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus recalled the teaching of the prophets to the minds of his countrymen in these words : “He that keepeth the law of the Lordgetteth the understanding thereof : and the perfection of the fear of the Lord is wisdom ⁴.” With still greater emphasis the same lesson was repeated by our Lord Himself : “If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God ⁵ ;” and, after Him, continued in the teaching of the Apostles : “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments ⁶.”

In accordance with this law of the kingdom of heaven, so frequently promulgated by the inspired messengers of God, and so carefully recorded for the instruction of all ages, we observe that, whenever an instance of conversion is related in the New Testament, the narration, however brief, seldom fails to exhibit traces of moral preparedness in those who are permitted to discern the truth. Thus, for example, Nathanael was “an Israelite indeed, in

³ Ps. cxi. 10. Prov. ix. 10.

⁴ Eccus. xxi. 11.

⁵ Joh. vii. 17.

⁶ 1 Joh. ii. 3.

whom was no guile⁷," before he was called to be a disciple of the Lord. Zacchæus gave a proof of earnestness in his eager desire to see and be instructed by Christ, and also in his willingness to make restitution and to show mercy to the poor, before those blessed words were uttered in his hearing; "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham ⁸." The Ethiopian officer displayed both humility and a desire for religious instruction in the interview with Philip which led to his conversion⁹. S. Paul from his youth up had "lived in all good conscience before God," and "touching the righteousness which was in the law was blameless;" and, wherein he sinned, he acted in ignorance, "verily thinking with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth ¹." Before Cornelius received the word of peace, "his prayers and his alms had gone up for a memorial before God ²." On the other hand, we may affirm that the Holy Scriptures supply no instance of a sincere convert, who appears, on the face of the narration, to have persisted in the unrestrained violation of the known obligations of religion and morality up to the very period of his conversion. Where no previous contrition is mentioned, it is rendered probable by the

⁷ Joh. i. 47.⁸ Luke xix. 2—10.⁹ Acts viii. 31.¹ Acts xxiii. 1. Phil. iii. 6. Acts xxvi. 9.² Acts x. 4.

attendant circumstances; as in the case of the penitent malefactor, whose punishment, the justice of which he acknowledged, had, no doubt, been for some time operating to produce a sense of guilt, and to revive whatever better desires he might formerly have cherished ³. If we ask how the Apostles sought to prepare the habitual sinner for the reception of the Gospel, we find an answer in the address of S. Paul to Felix. He discoursed upon topics rendered appropriate by the well-known character of the licentious and unjust governor, "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come ⁴."

II. The law connecting knowledge with obedience is clearly not at variance with the doctrine that the spiritual man alone is qualified to discern things spiritual. It is merely a representation of the same truth as we behold it from a different point of view. According to S. Paul, the truly spiritual man is one who is "*led* by the Spirit," who "walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and "through the Spirit mortifies the deeds of the body ⁵." In other words, the spiritual and the obedient are the same character, and, therefore, whichever statement we employ, the same condition of Divine knowledge is always understood. And it should be observed, that it is only by this harmony of truth, that due honour is secured to the Son and

³ Luke xxiii. 41.

⁴ Acts xxiv. 25.

⁵ Rom. viii. 1, 4, 13, 14. Gal. v. 16, 25, &c.

the Spirit both, for their respective work in the enlightenment of man. For when we affirm, that “the Lord layeth up sound wisdom for the *righteous* ⁶,” we are in truth declaring that wisdom is a privilege to which the servants of God are admitted as partakers of Him who was in the beginning the type and pattern of moral excellence in man, and who is now in the dispensation of our recovery, “Jesus Christ the righteous,” who, though “He knew no sin, hath been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him ⁷.” Thus we acknowledge that our teaching is *from* the Son, while we confess that we are taught *by* the Spirit. “As the creature first derives existence from the Father; secondly, reason from the Word; and then, holiness from the Spirit; so, again, what has before been sanctified by the Spirit is made capable of Christ as He is the Righteousness of God; and those things, which, through sanctification of the Holy Ghost, have arrived at this stage of progress, will, just the same, attain to the gift of wisdom according to the power and inward operation of the Spirit of God ⁸.” Another and more general consideration will help to explain and to illustrate the relation of obedience to knowledge. Every virtue which adorns a Christian is only a necessary feature of the new man in Christ, a neces-

⁶ Prov. ii. 7.

⁷ 1 Joh. ii. 1; 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁸ Orig. de. Princ. l. i. c. 2.

sary effect of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. He therefore who is pure is also merciful: he who is temperate is also just; though it may be in a different degree;—in a word, all the graces of the regenerate are intimately combined and interwoven, and no one can be extinct while the rest are strong and vigorous; because they all proceed from the same spiritual root, and are all refreshed with the same dew of blessing. Wherever, then, we see the presence of God in man attested by the unerring token of a godly life, there will also, in some measure, be surely found a power of spiritual perception, and a capacity of Divine wisdom, by which the soul may be enabled to see heavenly truth, and to know that it is of heaven.

III. It will be observed that this principle; namely, that they who do the will shall know the doctrine of God; is applicable to every stage of progress in the Christian life, exclusive only of the first act of duty on which the individual has been engaged. We are obliged to exclude this; because it is evident that some degree of knowledge must precede the first effort to obey⁹. A little light is given, and at the same time sufficient strength to pursue the guidance it affords. The first few steps in

⁹ Non enim diligitur quod penitus ignoratur; sed cum diligitur, quod ex quantulacunque parte cognoscitur, ipsa efficitur dilectione ut melius et plenius cognoscatur.—S. Aug. Tract. in Joh. Ev. xcvi. c. 4.

“the path of the just” are taken as in the gloom of morning twilight. As he advances, mistake and doubt are dispelled before the rising dawn, which, if he faint not in his pilgrimage, will “shine more and more unto the perfect day¹.” So that although righteousness and knowledge are both fruits of the Spirit, and simultaneous in their germ, a certain order is observed; for knowledge incites to obedience, and then obedience is rewarded by more knowledge: and when obedience has become habitual and universal, the soul attains to a clear and satisfying vision of the truth. “The Holy Spirit Himself both teaches the faithful now as many spiritual truths as each is capable of receiving, and inflames their hearts with greater desire, if they advance in that charity by which they are taught both to love that which they already know, and to long for that which is still to be known².”

IV. The Father, whose words have been just cited, was led to urge in controversy the obvious congruity of the great principle before us with our natural sense of equity. “Pelagius does not consider how deservedly the light forsakes the transgressor of the law;—forsaken of which he becomes in truth blind, and must perforce stumble and wound himself when he falls³.” What, indeed, can be more reasonable, than that they who act upon the

¹ Prov. iv. 18.

² S. Aug. Tract. xcvi. in Joh. Ev. c. 1.

³ De Nat. et Grat. § xxii.

imperfect knowledge which they possess should be rewarded by an extension of it? or that they who refuse to be guided by the light vouchsafed should forfeit the advantage which they despise, and from which, in fact, they have derived no benefit? This is, in truth, nothing more than a simple application of that law of the Divine government, so emphatically enunciated by our Saviour on two several occasions: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath⁴."

V. Before we leave the subject, it may be well to notice the practical effect of inculcating obedience as the condition of moral and spiritual wisdom. A life of devotion to good works, or even of sincere resistance to temptation, is something visible and palpable, and, therefore, supplies a criterion, available to ourselves as well as to others, of our advance in the knowledge of essential and saving truth; and, to some extent, of the value of our opinions and impressions, and of the confidence to be placed in their reality and honesty. Thus, where there is a heart willing to discover and lament its own defects, the intellect is brought by degrees under the control of conscience, and taught to perceive its own blindness to the things of God;

⁴ Matt. xiii. 12; xxv. 29. Luke viii. 18; xix. 26.

and the irreverence of a vain-glorious zeal is rebuked and chastened by recollections of sin and folly. Wisely, therefore, will the Christian teacher repeat the warning of S. Augustine: "Let no one reversing the right order of things desire to arrive at the heights of wisdom ere he has reached the low ground of obedience; for that is a point which he can never make, unless he come to it in due course ⁵." These simple words of caution assume a most touching force, when we observe how consistently the spirit of religious prudence, by which they were dictated, pervades the writings of their author, and learn that it was wrought in him, in great measure, by the bitter evils which he had himself experienced from the Manichean principles and heathen license of his early life. "I who address you," could he say to his hearers, "was once deceived myself, venturing, while quite a youth, to bring to the study of the Sacred Scriptures the acumen of the critic, before I brought the dutiful temper of the inquirer. By my perversity, I shut the gate of my Lord against myself. I should have knocked that it might be opened: I brought about that it was closed, for I dared to seek in pride what the humble alone can find ⁶."

But the principle supplies ground of encouragement as well as warning. As soon as we are

⁵ In Ps. cxix. Sermon. 22.

⁶ Sermon. li. de SS.

taught to see that every step in the path of duty is an advance in the knowledge of the truth, we are furnished with a constant incitement to persevere in our obedience, and to “add to our faith virtue,” that to our “virtue” we may add “knowledge⁷.”

VI. As an attempt is sometimes made to throw suspicion on the soundness of the principles which have been now considered by an invidious and unfair statement of them, it will be proper to notice briefly the difficulty which may arise from that cause. It is urged, then, that the effect of our teaching is to represent the moral nature and religious predilections of each man as his best guide towards the attainment of religious truth; so that it becomes the duty of every one to believe “that which is right in his own eyes,” without reference to external authority and the accustomed tests of credibility. It is certain that this statement is not altogether devoid of truth; but practically it has the effect of unmixed falsehood: because it does not recognise those limits and conditions, without which it cannot be applicable to human nature *as it is*. It is quite true that, at a certain stage of religious advancement, the spiritual and moral tastes are the surest test that the Christian could apply to a professed truth of natural or revealed religion; and, if so, it

⁷ 2 Pet. i. 5.

is equally clear that it becomes his duty to employ this test, and to be guided by the instincts and suggestions of his regenerate nature. It is evident also that, if he were already that which he tends to be, "a perfect man in Christ," his duty and his wishes would coincide, and it would be a matter of indifference whether principle or feeling took the lead in determining the object of belief, or whether he was conducted towards it by the joint influence of the two in perfect harmony. All this may be conceded safely; as indeed it is most true, although the objection founded on it is at the same time utterly untenable. For it is impossible to deny that even the most devoted followers of Christ are very far from attaining in this life to that absolute perfection which is here supposed. If the Apostles had attained to it as partakers of the gift which was common to all, it must be believed that they would not have required a miraculous inspiration to "lead them into all truth." It will be confessed, also, that the least sinful of those who are still in search of a religion are invariably below the common standard of Christian excellence. In practice, therefore, the bias of the heart will always be more or less opposed to spiritual truth, because more or less at variance with the commands and prohibitions of the moral law. Hence the decision has to be made under the influence of conflicting

motives. If we are led into the truth, it will be because we act on principle, and the consciousness of this will bring satisfaction, even before the soul feels its blessedness in the possession of the truth; but, at the time, we shall be exercising self-denial, and acting in opposition to many natural desires and tendencies. So far as nature is renewed by the Spirit, it will turn towards the truth; so far as it is unrenewed, it will turn from it.

It may also be well to say, in explanation, that nothing which has been here advanced must be understood to represent it as the duty of a bad man to adopt those opinions in religion, for which he finds himself to have a natural predilection. The truth is, that it is his inevitable tendency and a part of his punishment to be led into error by the dictates of a perverted heart. As the virtuous and pious can find no rest but in congenial truth, so the immoral and profane are attracted by a secret sympathy to misbelief and falsehood. With both the choice is the result of habits good or bad, and both are thus receiving, according to the universal law, the due reward of their own works. "We must ascribe this to the providence of God;—not that He makes men sinners, but that He thus orders when they have become sinners; for, reading the Scriptures with an evil desire through

sin, they cannot but understand them amiss; that this itself may be the punishment of their sin^s."

It must also be borne in mind that the moral discipline which conduces to a knowledge of the truth includes a submission of the intellect to every authority which has been appointed by God for its control and guidance. When the obligation of this principle begins to be understood, the humble seeker after truth soon feels that it requires him to view with mistrust some long-cherished impression or opinion, or to regard more favourably what he has before deemed false, on grounds which would appear inadequate were they not supported by the testimony of those whom he is at the same time learning to consider as his authorized instructors. In all this he is but following in the path of duty, and has no cause for wonder if it lead him whither he would at first be loath to go. He may feel as if he were leaving his own country and his father's house, but it is for a land of which God has told him; and if he go forth in faith he will in time be justified by faith; for duty is as the loadstar of life, which alone can guide the course of man through fear and darkness into the longed-for haven of repose and light.

VII. If now we advance another step and raise our thoughts from that which is wrought in man to

^s S. Aug. in Ps. vii. 14.

its Divine Agent, the reasonableness of the process which has been traced out becomes still more apparent. It is not possible for man to act more consistently with the true dignity of his nature, and with the purposes for which his faculties have been bestowed, than when he acts, not only in obedience to the law of God, but at the same time under the immediate influence of His Spirit. The sincere believer has so acted. The Spirit of truth has led him to a knowledge of the truth. Religious instincts and predilections, spiritual sympathies and tastes, are only the results and tokens of His presence, who is the living fountain of all truth in morals and religion, of all authority in the teacher, and of all power to understand in the disciple. It is He who has watched to impart whatever there was power to receive, and with it has inspired both the desire and the capacity of more: at once the agent of present illumination, and the earnest of a more glorious gift of light and knowledge. The pride of man would make him dream of being his own instructor and his own saviour; but in very mercy it hath pleased his Maker to devise another way, and one as full of comfort as of safety. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, no less than of humility, in those who desire "to find the knowledge of God," to look up to Him alone for the fulfilment of their hope, and to beseech Him to lead their erring steps into the way of truth.

Nor will those who trust that He is so leading them forbear to praise Him for their deliverance from ignorance as well as sin ; or cease to pray that in this, as in all other things, they may be guided by His hand and cherished by His love, and carried on from strength to strength, until they appear before Him in Zion.

CHAPTER XI.

THE most important results of the investigation pursued through the last five chapters may be thus briefly stated. It has been established that by the creation of man in the image of God, we are to understand that he was conformed, in all the essentials of his rational being, to the Eternal Word, the Son of God; who, therefore, when He came down from Heaven, and was "found in fashion as a man," exhibited the perfection of our common nature, of which He had been originally the Archetype and Pattern. It has further been shewn, that this assimilation of man to "the image of God" was wrought in him by the Divine Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, of whom he was made a partaker on his very formation from the dust of the earth: and that from Him, the Spirit of truth, that knowledge of God which is inherent in His image derived a living and impulsive energy through which it became the supreme principle of action in the soul. We have also seen reason to conclude, that the children of sinful

Adam, however fallen from the estate of glory to which their first parents were created, have, notwithstanding, ever retained some traces of the law of nature, obscurely, but not illegibly engraven on their hearts; that they have never been altogether deserted by the Spirit of God, by whose aid only they can be enabled to decypher and obey that law; and that, in proportion to their obedience, they have ever been led forward to an increased knowledge of the Divine will and nature. Finally, we have learnt that these relics of the pristine state of man, are fully recognised in the economy of our salvation through Jesus Christ; and that the end of His coming in the flesh was to rebuild on that foundation the superstructure of perfection which fell in ruins on the first act of wilful sin.

From the conclusions above stated, it is apparent that the difference between man and man under different dispensations, however great, may be properly described as one of degree only; from which we should infer that, in recommending the Revelation of Christ to the belief of others, our method of reasoning or instruction ought to be conformed to the *same ultimate* principles, whether our immediate object be the conversion of the Heathen, or of the Jew, the recovery of the apostate, or the confirmation of the wavering Christian. These fundamental principles must be combined,

however, in various proportions with certain other principles of natural or revealed truth, when we proceed to apply them in our respective treatment of those several classes : and again, it will be found necessary to modify and adapt our more general methods thus carefully constructed, to meet the peculiar requirements of the individual in each class.

At length, then, we appear to have before us, and in sufficient light, the most important of those truths respecting the nature of man and his relations to God, which must form the basis of every successful attempt to imbue him with the love and the knowledge of Divine things. It remains that we proceed from theory to practice ; and, combining the doctrines which have been now rehearsed with the principles developed in the earlier chapters of this work, endeavour to ascertain the laws, founded upon such premises, which ought to influence the motives and regulate the conduct of the religious teacher. If such deductions should at first appear somewhat indefinite and vague, it may be expected that they will acquire precision of outline and distinctness of meaning from the illustrations which it is proposed to add from Holy Scripture.

The present results of our investigation appear, then, to suggest as both expedient and right in theory, and therefore to demand, as well as justify, in practice, a studious adaptation of the arguments

for Revelation to the character and circumstances of the individual; a consequent selection, for the time, and apparent preference of one portion, or one aspect, of the whole truth; the employment of any instrument of persuasion or conviction, not excluded upon moral grounds, which seems to give a promise of success; a wakeful recollection of the ethical basis of all personal religion, and of the necessity of strengthening and securing this foundation before we allow ourselves to hope that any stable superstructure can be erected on it; lastly, a confident expectance of the secret promptings of the Spirit of truth, whose office it is to make the external means of conviction efficacious to the instruction of the willing and obedient, and to bring to their remembrance whatsoever divine fact or principle of knowledge they have at any time received from the several or joint testimonies of grace, nature, and tradition.

In the present and the succeeding chapter it will be our endeavour to exhibit a direct scriptural warrant for the alleged principles of didactic method, and, in so doing, at the same time to illustrate their application, from the example of the first teachers of the Gospel, and, more particularly, of our Lord Himself.

I. The preparatory mission of John the Baptist is perhaps the most obvious of those Divine acts

which tend to fix upon our Saviour's conduct towards those to whom He was immediately sent the general character of which an outline has been drawn. The object of the Baptist's ministry is thus stated by the angel who foretold his birth: "He shall go before Him in the Spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord¹." From the provision thus divinely made for the moral purification of the people as conducive to the right reception of the Messiah, we infer that such a change of habits and affections was necessary to the due appreciation of such testimony to His character and nature as He might vouchsafe to offer. In an earlier prophecy John the Baptist is represented as an officer sent forward to prepare the roads of an uneven and difficult country for the triumphant progress of a mighty Prince. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed²." In other words, the proud, the sensual, and the unrighteous,

¹ Luke i. 17.² Is. xl. 3—5.

must listen to the stern preacher of repentance, and renounce their favourite sins, before their eyes can entertain the vision of "the glory of the Lord."

The words of the angel who appeared to Zacharias refer to the prediction of the prophet Malachi, in the conclusion of which we find these words of solemn warning: "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse³." From this we should infer, that the guilt of rejecting Christ would be imputed in the day of vengeance to all those who, from having neglected that moral culture of the heart which predisposes to belief, should be unable to read the Divine credentials of truth that were displayed before their eyes. For it should be noticed that the course of penitential discipline described in prophecy, is the only preparation which appears to be supposed as likely to conduce to that dutiful reception of the Son of God which should avert the threatened wrath.

We do not gather from the Gospels that the preaching of John conveyed much explicit information respecting the Messiah to the great body of the people. It is probable that, whatever he may have taught a few intimate disciples, his public declarations only expressed in a more exact form the strong, though indistinct, expectations of all who were then looking for redemption

³ Mal. iv. 6.

in Israel. Certain undefined anticipations and obscure opinions, long cherished as a ground of national pride, if not of spiritual hope, would gather shape and confirmation from his teaching, and begin to supply encouragement and food for hopeful musing to the penitent; but, at the same time, would still be left so general and indefinite, would still be so far shrouded in uncertainty and mystery, as to elude the intellectual grasp of the mere disputant, and to appear foolishness to the self-righteous and the wise of this world. The great object of the Baptist's ministry was manifestly this;—to establish more rigid rules of moral duty, to diffuse a better spirit throughout the nation, and to produce in individuals such a sense of the guilt and burden of sin as might ensure their joyful acceptance of the law of liberty.

The preparation of the chosen people for the personal ministry of Christ, which had been thus commenced, was further promoted and prolonged by the first mission of the Apostles and their colleagues. When S. Luke relates the sending of the seventy, he expressly mentions that our Lord “sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come⁴.” His instructions to both parties were simply that they should heal the sick, and announce, in the well-known words of John, that “the kingdom of

⁴ Luke x. 1.

heaven was at hand ⁵." The manner in which the Apostles obeyed these injunctions, as related by S. Mark, shows forcibly that they considered the moral improvement of those among whom they were sent to be the chief object of their mission at this time : " They went out and preached that men should repent ⁶."

The impression derived from the foregoing facts is greatly strengthened by the preparatory nature of our Lord's own ministry. It is not necessary to prove now that His work on earth as a teacher is rightly entitled to this character; as that will become sufficiently apparent when we consider His teaching and actions in their relations to the various portions of our present subject. Let it suffice to say here, that He laboured in His own Person to mould the popular religion on a more spiritual type, and to enforce more holy principles of moral practice; and that, in so doing, He prolonged and completed the introductory training of the nation, (so far as the nation would itself permit,) for the final and unrestricted revelation of the Gospel. The length and completeness of this preliminary education of the chosen people is the best evidence of its necessity, or at least, the best measure of its expediency. We cannot reflect on the extended forethought and elaborate care thus dis-

⁵ Matt. x. 7.—Comp. iii. 2; Luke ix. 2.

⁶ Mark vi. 12.

played by the all-wise God, when He designed to make an appeal to the spiritual instincts of man, without becoming sensible of the natural enmity which is borne to Divine truth by the corrupt heart of man, and also of the obligation incumbent on its teachers to anticipate the difficulties that will arise from this cause by subjecting their disciples, as far as in each case is requisite, to the same course of moral preparation.

II. The recorded actions and instructions of our Lord Himself, and of the Apostles after they had received power from above to be His witnesses to all the world, will now be adduced to confirm and illustrate those principles which we have asserted to be characteristic of their ministry. An extensive collation of facts is not possible within the limits which must be observed; nor is it necessary; for a very few examples, if unambiguous in their bearing and not disparaged by any instances of a conflicting tendency, are amply sufficient to fix the common principle of which they are expressions.

1. One very considerable point is the undoubted prominence given to the simple inculcation of moral principle in the general teaching of our Lord. The longest of His recorded discourses is a direct enforcement and expansion of the moral obligations of the law, which, in the popular interpretation as well as practice, had lost much of

their legitimate extent and stringency. He brought the commands and prohibitions of the decalogue to bear upon the hidden thoughts and feelings of the heart, and thus enlarged the province, and increased the afflictive power, of conscience. One evident effect of this would be, to evince the necessity, and excite the désiré, of a dispensation, which, while it demanded obedience, should at the same time confer the inclination and the power to obey.

2. The parables of our Lord have all more or less of the same preparatory character: some teaching the necessity of lowliness of mind and penitence,—as do the parables of Lazarus and the rich man, of the Pharisee and the publican, of the returning prodigal, of the lost sheep, and the forgiven debtors; others, speaking of His kingdom upon earth, its duties, laws, and privileges,—as those of the unjust judge, the unforgiving servant, the dishonest steward, of the labourers in the vineyard, the wedding of the king's son, the little leaven in the lump, the good and worthless fishes in one net; others inculcating watchfulness, and representing in a figure the dreadful punishment of those whom Christ at His coming should find either unprepared to render their account, or not willing to acknowledge Him,—as the similitudes of the ten virgins, the wicked husbandmen, and the servants waiting for their lord's return.

3. The same general end was answered by His startling rebukes of the hypocrisy and vices of the age, and by His frequent intimations, more or less distinct, that those whom He addressed were on their trial, that a winnowing of the chaff from the wheat was taking place, and that vengeance would fall speedily and smite the impenitent with the predicted curse.

4. His acts of Divine power were also made in some degree subservient to the same great purpose. There was much in His miracles of healing, to which class by far the greater portion of His mighty works belong, that was calculated to elevate the sentiments and purify the moral dispositions of the beholder. As deeds of mercy, they would excite gratitude and love in many; as deeds of power, they would raise admiration and respect in many more: as examples, they would encourage sympathy with distress, and stimulate exertion for its relief. They would lead to serious reflection on the dreadful nature of sin, of which disease is both a type and consequence; and to earnest endeavours to obtain its pardon, of which the miraculous cure of disease was at once the type and pledge. He Himself took care to direct the thoughts of the spectators into this channel. Witness His address to the paralytic of Capernaum: "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" the remarks which followed it, and the explanation which He vouchsafed to

give⁷. Witness His words of warning to the helpless sick man whom He found lying beside the pool of Bethesda: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee⁸."

III. In this way He prepared the soil and scattered seeds of faith, that others, when He was gone, might enter into His labours and reap the harvest. But during this time He publicly proclaimed only one special doctrine of the Gospel, and that in an imperfect form; namely, His authority as a teacher sent from God. In asserting this, He seldom distinguished between His own office and character and those of the ancient Prophets. If He appealed to miracles—"Believe Me for the very works' sake⁹;" Moses and Elijah had done the same before Him¹. He even interposed a caution or a prohibition on several occasions, when the mystery of His true character seemed likely to escape. When He delivered the possessed, He suffered not the evil spirits to speak, "for they knew that He was the Christ²." When His disciples had been at length assured, not from His own mouth, but by inspiration from above, that He was indeed "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," "He straitly charged them and commanded

⁷ Matt. ix. 2—6. Mark ii. 3. Luke v. 18.

⁸ Joh. v. 14.

⁹ Joh. xiv. 11; v. 36; x. 38.

¹ Exod. iv. 5; viii. 10; Num. xvi. 7, &c.; 1 Kings xviii. 24.

² Luke iv. 41.

them to tell no man that thing³.” The Jews were clearly not aware that He had openly declared Himself to be the Messiah ; for we find them, towards the close of His ministry, putting the question to Him in these terms : “ How long dost Thou make us doubt ? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.” It is also implied in His answer that He had made no verbal declaration of His claim to their obedience on that ground ; for He referred them to His works as the evidence on which, if willing, they might have believed : “ I told you, and ye believed not. The works that I do in My Father’s Name, they bear witness of Me.” On the same occasion He was understood to intimate that God was His Father by a peculiar and extraordinary relation, and thereby to “ make Himself God ;” but when the astonished audience accepted His words in a sense approaching, if not equalling, the truth, He seemed willing to give them the choice of a lower construction of His meaning. “ If he called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am *a* Son of God ⁴ ?”

³ Matt. xvi. 16 ; Luke ix. 21.

⁴ Joh. x. 24, 25. 33—36. The article is omitted before *viòs* in ver. 36. It is used in the four passages next referred to in the text ; viz. Joh. iii. 18 ; ix. 35 ; xi. 4 ; and v. 25, where see ver. 27.

Only on four occasions do we read that He spoke of Himself in so many words as "*the* Son of God," and on each of these He appears to have respected the principle of caution, of which indications have been now pointed out. He used the expression in the secret interview with Nicodemus, when only He also added the epithet "only-begotten;" again, when He spoke privately to the poor man to whom He had given sight, when He heard that he had been cast out of the synagogue; and a third time, in the remark which fell from Him, addressed evidently to His disciples, when He was told of the sickness of Lazarus. On the remaining occasion, He was speaking openly before the Jews; but in the same discourse He also gave Himself the more usual title of "the Son of Man," the effect of which would be to diminish the force of that higher designation to minds unacquainted with the doctrine that in Him the two perfect natures were united in one Person. He sometimes spoke of Himself as "the Son," referring at the same time to "the Father;" but it is remarkable that, whenever this occurs before a mixed assembly of friends and enemies, He also introduces the title expressive of His humanity⁵. Indeed

⁵ Joh. vi. 40 (see ver. 27. 53), and viii. 35, 36 (see ver. 28). For the use of the two titles in the same private discourse, see Mark xiii. 26. 32; Joh. xiii. 31, with xiv. 13. The omission of the lower title occurs, Luke x. 18—22.

only once altogether, and that on a peculiar occasion, was this precaution (for such it seems to be) omitted; namely, in His discourse to the Seventy, when they returned to Him full of faith and joy on account of the great works which they had done in His Name. Nor is there more than a single instance upon record of His spontaneously declaring Himself to be the Christ; and the circumstances of that exception appear sufficient to explain it. He was speaking to a solitary stranger, whom He met by accident, — a Samaritan by nation, and residing beyond the sphere of His ministry⁶. It is obvious that those dangers, which must arise to sinful men from the known habitual presence of the Holy One of God, were not to be apprehended in this sole instance of departure from His wonted silence. At the tribunal of the high priest, being adjured by the Living God, He no longer withheld the acknowledgment that He was “the Christ, the Son of God;” but this was only a few hours before His death, after which event it was decreed that the whole truth should be proclaimed to all the world⁷.

⁶ Joh. iv. 26.

⁷ Matt. xxvi. 63. Ancient writers have left many remarks upon our Saviour’s partial revelation of Himself before His Ascension. They agree in thinking that He adopted this method as more conducive to the effectual publication of the whole truth at a more fitting time. Thus Origen and S. Chrysostom argue that it was better for the world not to be

The same rule of partial and gradual disclosure was observed when the subject of discourse approached less nearly to the central doctrine of the Gospel. When, for example, some demanded of our Lord, "By what authority doest Thou these things?" He repelled the question by proposing another which the inquirers could not answer without compromising themselves⁸. Since it is a first principle in religion that "He willeth all men to be saved, and to come to an acknowledgment of the truth⁹;" if He is seen to delay the communication of the truth, it must be that the knowledge of it would be at present useless, or perhaps even dangerous. His silence, therefore, shows that the inquirers were not in a state to profit by the more open announcement of His Divine authority. Their perverse will resisted the many indications of Divine power and goodness continually before their eyes, the witness of the Father, as He Himself declared, which, if they had been willing and obedient, would

told all His claims to veneration; for, if even the Apostles were offended at His sufferings, how much more would they have been offended who had been less with Him. "He did it," says the latter, "that when offences should have ceased, and nothing should be left to disturb and unsettle the faith of the many in Him, the right and proper opinion of Him might be imprinted free from error and indelible upon the minds of the hearers."—Orig. in Matt. xvi. 20, tom. xii. § 17. S. Chrys. Hom. liv. in Matt. tom. ii. p. 110.—See S. Jerome on Matt. xvi. 20, and S. Ambrose on Luke ix. 21, §§ 101, 107.

⁸ Matt. xxi. 23.

⁹ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

have gained force from day to day, and grown into an overwhelming and resistless weight of evidence. He therefore adopted a course which so effectually rebuked their unhallowed curiosity, that "no man, from that day forth, durst ask Him any more questions ¹. Yet while He silenced the unconscientious gainsayer, He forgot not His character of a deliverer from sin and falsehood; for those very difficulties, which He raised in the minds of His opponents, were calculated to lead them to reflect on the unrighteous principles which influenced their reasonings, and thus to produce humility and a more genuine desire of truth.

A very clear adaptation of the means and method of instruction to the existing wants and ability of the disciple is to be remarked in the frequent use of parables. Our Lord expressly declared, that these could not be otherwise than obscurely understood by the majority of His hearers. "Unto you," said He to His more constant followers,—“unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables.” It would appear that He even distinguished the character and temper prevailing at the moment in the shifting multitudes which gathered round Him, and that He chose the topics of His discourse accordingly. Thus S. Mark having recorded the parables which He delivered on

¹ Matt. xxii. 46.

the occasion of the foregoing remark, concludes by saying, "With many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear it²."

In further conformity with this principle, He would without doubt remain altogether silent where there was no meetness to receive His words, as He abstained from working miracles where there was no faith. A prudential silence upon such grounds is indeed most evidently within the scope of His own precept: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine³." He has also given in His own conduct at least one clear practical exemplification of the rule so understood. When the Gergesenes besought Him to depart out of their coasts, He went at once, without a single effort in His own person to correct their misconception of His character, although the "whole city" stood before Him, at least ready to receive rebuke, if not desirous of instruction in righteousness. At the same time, it is much to our purpose to observe that, while He left them Himself, as unable to profit by His presence, He provided a means of partially removing that disability. He gave the man whom He had delivered from demoniacal possession an express charge to "go home to his friends and tell them how great things the Lord had done for him⁴." Thus while He appeared to leave them to them-

² Mark iv. 11, 33. ³ Matt. vii. 6. Comp. Prov. xxiii. 9.

⁴ Matt. viii. 34; Mark v. 19; Luke viii. 37.

selves in their self-chosen ignorance and blindness, He was in fact beginning to prepare them for the effectual preaching of the Apostles and their fellow-labourers.

He appears to act upon the same principle when He meets the inquiries of those who were in some degree, but not entirely, qualified to profit by the knowledge which they sought. When He was asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved," He said unto them, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate ⁵." When Thomas expostulated, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest ; and how can we know the way?" Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life ⁶;" an answer which we should think likely, instead of relieving perplexity, to raise new difficulties in a doubting mind. "Philip saith unto Him, Shew us the Father ; and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" "Henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him," was the assertion which tried the faith and prompted the inquiry of the Apostle ; but the answer afforded no explanation to the unenlightened understanding. The same mystery is repeated in still stronger terms, but in a tone of expostulation calculated to affect the feelings and awaken the conscience of the indocile disciple : "Believe Me, that I am in the

⁵ Luke xiii. 23.

⁶ Joh. xiv. 5, 6.

Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake ⁷." It was not till the close of His ministry, and after the Apostles had made a considerable advance in the knowledge of His true character, that He spake to them plainly about the great events of which they were themselves to be the witnesses. "From that time forth," says S. Matthew, that is, from the time of S. Peter's remarkable confession, "began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Yet it appears that even then the knowledge of these events, though still future, was too much for the weak faith of some, perhaps of all; for they "savoured not the things that be of God, but those that be of men ⁸." In His discourse upon the eve of the crucifixion, He tells them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now ⁹." At the same time He intimated that the Spirit alone, whose coming He then announced, could enable them to understand those mysteries aright. Nay, it appears, that even after they had received the most convincing testimony to His truth by the fulfilment of these prophecies in His death and resurrection, they were not yet deemed worthy of an unambiguous expla-

⁷ Joh. xiv. 7—12. ⁸ Matt. xvi. 21—23. ⁹ Joh. xvi. 12.

nation of the nature of His kingdom. For in answering their question, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He forebore all comment on the misconception which it betrayed, and merely saying, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons," began to turn their attention to those practical duties which would devolve on them, when they should have received power and understanding from on high¹. But here we should observe, that though a remarkable effusion of the Spirit was needed "to guide them into all truth," there is evidence to show, that even the beginner in the school of Christ was not entirely destitute of this enlightening principle. Thus some were enabled imperfectly to anticipate the disclosure of His Divinity. The confession of S. Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," is expressly referred to inspiration by our Lord Himself². From the same source we may confidently derive the sudden conviction of Nathanael: "Thou art the Son of God³;" the great faith joined with knowledge of the centurion, whose servant was sick of the palsy⁴; the adoration of those who saw Him walk on the sea and still the tempest⁵; the prayer of the repentant malefactor⁶; the confession of those who watched Him on the Cross, that "truly

¹ Acts i. 6—8.² Matt. xvi. 16.³ Joh. i. 49.⁴ Matt. viii. 8—10.⁵ Ib. xiv. 33.⁶ Luke xxiii. 42.

this was the Son of God⁷." We are told by Origen and Justin Martyr, who both had excellent means of informing themselves upon the subject, that the Jews did not expect their Messiah to be the Son of God⁸; and this statement is borne out by inference from the Scriptures. We can therefore only attribute this recognition of the Sonship, or of the supreme power of Jesus, to a direct illumination of the soul by Divine influence.

When the Apostles in their turn had become the sole depositories of Divine truth on earth, they followed the example of their great Teacher in not exposing to the incredulous, to the unworthy, and unprepared, the more sacred mysteries confided to their keeping. Thus, when S. Peter was addressing Jews upon the day of Pentecost, he went no further than to affirm that Jesus, with whose history they were more or less acquainted, was the Messiah who had been promised to the nation, and that God had raised Him from the dead, "whereof," says he, "we all are witnesses⁹." Before Cornelius and his company, not yet enlightened by the descent of the Spirit, he speaks of Jesus Christ anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, put to death, raised again the third day, and

⁷ Matt. xxvii. 54.

⁸ Origen c. Cels. l. i. p. 38. Comp. l. ii. p. 79; l. iv. p. 162. Just. M. D. c. Tryph. § 49. Sim. S. Chrys. Hom. lxxi. in Matt. xxii. 42; tom. ii. p. 331.

⁹ Acts ii. 22—36.

ordained the future judge of the quick and dead ¹. S. Paul, in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, simply discourses of Jesus the Son of David, whom the Jews put to death, whom God raised again, through whom is preached the forgiveness of sins ². At Thessalonica, he argued from the Prophets that "Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead," and showed that "Jesus, whom he preached, is He ³." At Corinth, too, his preaching simply testified that "Jesus is the Christ ⁴." To the men of Athens he spoke only of natural truths, not altogether unheard of in the schools of their philosophers, except where he proceeded to announce the Resurrection, and to declare that the judgment of the world had been committed to That man Whom God had ordained ⁵. S. Chrysostom thus comments upon the Apostle's choice of subject on this occasion: "What art thou doing, O blessed Paul? Thou sayest nothing about the form of God; nor that He is equal to Him, nor that He is the brightness of His glory. No; he says, This were no good time for these subjects. We must be content that they receive thus much,—that He is a man. Thus also did He act Himself; I learnt this method from Him. For He did not at once reveal His Divinity to us; but was first esteemed a prophet and Christ—a man merely; and after-

¹ Acts x. 36—43.² Ib. xiii. 23—39.³ Acts xvii. 3.⁴ Ib. xviii. 5.⁵ Ib. xvii. 22—31.

wards was made known what He was⁶." The great Apostle acted on the same principle in his speech to the people at Jerusalem immediately after his rescue from their violence by the chief captain Lysias⁷; and again when, shortly after, he defended himself before Festus and Agrippa⁸. On those occasions he merely related his own conversion, and briefly stated, or made allusion to, such doctrines of the Gospel as by that time had become familiar to the whole nation: as that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-expected Christ, that He had risen from the dead, and must be preached throughout the world, to Jew and Gentile, as many prophets had foretold.

IV. The principles which we are tracing in the records of our Lord's ministry are also singularly illustrated by certain partial disclosures of doctrinal truth which He made, and by the results which followed. He seemed at times to put forward isolated portions—mere fragments, as it were, of the new doctrine, in a manner the least calculated, as indeed the event proved, to procure for it a speedy or a welcome reception. The uninviting form in which it was presented was, notwithstanding, well adapted to promote its eventual success. It would do much to secure the religion which He taught from being adopted without consideration,

⁶ Cat. in Act. SS. App. Cramer. p. 299.

⁷ Acts xxii. 1—21.

⁸ Ib. xxvi. 2—23.

or from unworthy motives, and thus preserve it from the ruinous support of the unstable and insincere; and it would lead the well-disposed to discern and lament with deeper truth their own want of proportion with the Divine standard of things spiritual, and thus prepare them to receive a greater measure of the gift of God whenever He might vouchsafe it. A remarkable instance of this method of teaching may be seen in that mixture of the sternest rebuke with obscure and broken intimations of high truth which characterizes our Lord's discourse in the temple as recorded in the eighth chapter of S. John. The immediate effect was that "they took up stones to cast at Him ⁹."

The same peculiarity attended the development of the doctrine of the two great sacraments. The first allusion made by Christ to that of Baptism, already ordained in the Divine counsels as the door of entrance into His Church, was conveyed in that perplexing answer to the half-believing Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ¹." As might be anticipated, this abrupt assertion of a mysterious doctrine repelled, instead of attracting, the wavering inquirer. It made a large demand on his docility, on his humility, and reverence for wisdom as exhibited in the person of his teacher. In short, it

⁹ Joh. viii. 59.

¹ Ib. iii. 3

acted as a trial of faith. If the difficulty involved were presented to a person not religiously disposed, and, in consequence, not sufficiently impressed by the many tokens of Divinity which shone in the words and actions of our Lord, he would stumble at the seeming impossibility, and argue himself into unbelief and contempt of the Divine mystery ; while another, more humble, reverent, and pure, penetrated and subdued by a sense, however indistinct, of something above and beyond himself, would, like the Blessed Virgin upon similar occasions, treasure up those solemn and enigmatic words, and ponder them in his heart, abiding patiently God's time for the development of their mysterious meaning. Nor can we doubt that such a devout and searching meditation on those words of Christ would most effectually prepare the meek inquirer to accept with joy and thankfulness the evangelic doctrine of our new-birth in Him.

The same apparent indifference to the prejudices of the hearers and disregard of the immediate effect are seen in those anticipatory allusions to the other great Sacrament, which S. John has recorded in the sixth chapter of his Gospel. Our Lord had said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you ;" a startling announcement, the result of which it was not difficult to foresee. "Many, therefore, of His disciples, when they had heard it, said, This is an hard saying,

who can hear it? . . . From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Yet this hard saying was not an arbitrary mode of repelling disciples, as worthy as those who still adhered to Him; for He Himself lays bare, in a few words, the real, though recondite cause, of their desertion. "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father²."

But it is easy to discern the advantage which men of a believing temper would subsequently derive from this preparatory lesson in the school of Christ: the irresistible force and sudden clearness of import with which those obscure but cherished words of the Great Teacher would be brought back to the minds of all who, though not able to understand them, yet with S. Peter believed them to be "the words of eternal life," when, in the institution of the Eucharist, their Master was heard to utter of the bread, "This is My Body," and of the wine, "This is My Blood³." Then assuredly did they receive the long-deferred but sure reward of humble faith and hopeful waiting on the Lord.

In the examples to which we have just referred, our Lord's manner of teaching was calculated to expose and correct that moral unsoundness which

² Joh. vi. 53—66.

³ Matt. xxvi. 26, 28.

betrays itself in the pride of intellect and in licentious reasoning upon sacred things. When He perceived a worldly or carnal disposition, it was His wont to subject it, in the same manner, to an appropriate trial and discipline by exacting some unusual exercise of practical obedience, as when He commanded the rich young man, whose general excellence was such that He loved him, to “go his way, and sell whatsoever he had, and give to the poor⁴.” We may presume, however, that on this, and on similar occasions, the words of the Speaker were seconded by the operation of that special grace, without which He, at the time, declared it to be impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. His command was not indeed opposed to the highest reason of His hearer; but it was one to which obedience could hardly be expected from the mere moral advancement of an Israelite of that day. It is also difficult to conceive that obedience to a call, so completely ignored at that time in the received code of duties, could have imposed a moral obligation, if it were supported only by external warrants of authority. We conclude, therefore, that the word of Christ went forth with power, and that when the young man disobeyed His injunctions, he was also re-

⁴ Mark x. 17—27.

sisting His Spirit, which would have taught him a wisdom beyond worldly prudence, and given him, in exchange for the abundance of his earthly lot, a treasure incorruptible, eternal in the heavens.

To a similar purpose we may refer those strong representations of duty or of suffering by which our Lord sometimes repressed the inconsiderate, or instructed the ignorant, zeal which urged men to follow Him before they fully understood the extent or nature of their undertaking. To one He explained the hardships to which he would expose himself by becoming His disciple: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head ⁵." To another, who would wait for his father's death, probably with some view to his inheritance, He spake sternly: "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God ⁶." A third, held back by ties of earthly affection, was thus admonished: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God ⁷." He spoke often of the cross which must be taken up by all who would follow Him ⁸; He warned His disciples, that He was not come to send peace on earth, but a sword ⁹; and gave them clearly to understand that their own

⁵ Luke ix. 58.

⁶ Ib. ver. 60.

⁷ Ib. ver. 62.

⁸ Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24. Luke xiv. 27.

⁹ Matt. x. 34.

sufferings would be extreme in the conflict of interests and feelings to which the preaching of the Gospel would give rise¹. In short, He made the trials of faith as prominent in His teaching as they are in the providential events of life: for He knew what was in man; He discerned the secret preparation of the heart, and relied on the co-operating agency of the Spirit of grace and truth.

¹ Matt. x. 16 – 39; xxiv. 9. Joh. xvi. 2, 33, &c.

CHAPTER XII.

THE notices contained in the last chapter of the method of instruction pursued by our Lord and the Apostles, though of necessity both brief and incomplete, appear notwithstanding to afford sufficient sanction to some of those rules for the direction of the Christian teacher which were stated, before we entered upon this part of our inquiry, as the results of previous and independent considerations. As yet, however, we have neither noticed all the principles of method observable in the teaching of our great models, nor have we even exhausted the testimony which they bear to those that have already come before us. It therefore remains for us to show that there are other facts recorded of them, partly in their conduct, and partly in the divinely-ordered circumstances by which they were surrounded, which bear out the inferences already drawn from fewer premises respecting the Divine mode of conveying truth to sinful man.

I. We have witnessed in the *teaching* of our Blessed Lord a constant regard to the existing spi-

ritual and moral state of those to whom He spake. The same kind of consideration was evinced by many of His *actions*. Of this a remarkable instance occurs in His refusal to display His Divine power in such a manner as to furnish what the unbelieving disputant might consider a satisfactory proof of His authority. He has Himself declared the cause of His refusal; they were an "evil and adulterous generation¹," unworthy of such evidence, unfit to profit by it. Indeed, we are told that there were occasions, on which He was absolutely interdicted, as it were, from the striking display of miraculous power by the absence of a becoming disposition in those who would be its witnesses. "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief²." There can be no doubt that His forbearance on these occasions had a purpose of mercy as well as of judgment; as ancient commentators have not failed to observe; "Not that He was unable," remarks S. Jerome, "to perform many miracles in spite of their unbelief; but that He might not, by so doing, condemn His unbelieving countrymen³." And similarly S. Chrysostom, "that He might not involve them in a greater condemnation by aggravating their unbelief⁴."

With the same provident and gracious purpose

¹ Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4. ² Matt. xiii. 58. ³ Ad loc.

⁴ Hom. xlviii. in Matt. ad loc. cit. t. ii. p. 27.

we may suppose it to have been ordered that, even when a great manifestation of Almighty power took place, the bystanders were sometimes very inadequately impressed by the scene which they witnessed. Their eyes appear to have been holden, so that they could discern but little of its real character and significance. Otherwise we might deem that those who had seen Lazarus restored to life would have been restrained by personal fear from acting against One Who could exert such awful power ⁵. The fearful hardihood of Judas requires a similar explanation. Again, there are but few instances of miracles on record in which all who were present appreciated what they saw so far as to glorify God for it. One of these exceptions took place at Capernaum, near the beginning of His ministry, and before the jealousy of the rulers had attained its full malignancy ⁶. Another was in His last progress from Galilee to Jerusalem, when He was surrounded by persons whose interest in Him is evidenced by their share in His laborious journey ⁷. A third, and, it would seem, the only remaining instance of unanimity expressly noticed, occurred at the feeding of the five thousand by a few loaves and fishes ⁸. It should be observed, however, that this large assemblage was not the fortuitous concourse of a great town or populous neighbourhood, but

⁵ Joh. xi. 46.

⁶ Luke v. 26.

⁷ Luke xviii. 43.

⁸ Joh. vi. 14.

was composed of persons from various parts, who had sought Christ out in the place of His retirement⁹: because they had seen His previous miracles “which He did on them that were diseased¹.” Many of that numerous company had themselves been healed², and all had been refreshed by His miraculous bounty. Yet even in this case the impression, however deep at first, appears to have soon worn away, even in those whom we must suppose to have been most strongly affected at the time, the ministers as well as witnesses and partakers of His bounty. For it was only a few hours after the second miracle of the same kind, by which four thousand had been fed, that our Lord had occasion to address His disciples in these terms; “Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand . . . neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up³?” Such forgetfulness and blindness were surely unaccountable, if we did not believe that those reasons which sometimes induced Him to forbear working miracles, also led Him, occasionally at least, to temper the force of those which He wrought to the existing disposition and belief of the spectators.

That some intervention of this kind must have been employed becomes yet more evident when we

⁹ Matt. xiv. 13. Mark vi. 33.

¹ Joh. vi. 2.

² Matt. xiv. 14. Luke ix. 11.

³ Matt. xvi. 9, 10.

take into consideration what has been termed the contagious influence of all strong emotions. In large assemblies of men, such as were the frequent witnesses of our Saviour's mighty works, the predominant feeling, especially when suddenly aroused, is wont to spread and strengthen by the force of secret sympathy, until the most sober and collected are surprised to find themselves partaking in the enthusiasm which agitates their neighbours⁴. These remarks receive an additional confirmation when we observe that, although the whole effect which might have been anticipated was not permitted to attend the most striking of our Lord's miracles, yet an adequate result did certainly follow some exhibitions of Divine power that took place after His ascension, when it was no longer necessary to put a restraint upon the feelings of the multitude⁵. Witness the amazement, and the mutual questioning, which increased while it attested that amazement, and the consequent rich harvest of three thousand souls, when the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles, and "they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"⁶. Witness the free "wonder and amazement" of "all the people who ran together," when the lame man was healed at the Beautiful gate of

⁴ D. Stewart, Act. and Mor. Powers, B. ii. c. 2.

⁵ Comp. Joh. vi. 15, which suggests a further reason for the restraint supposed.

⁶ Acts ii. 1—12, 41.

the temple⁷. Witness the earnest conduct of the people of Samaria; their unanimity in "giving heed to the things which Philip spake, when they heard and saw the miracles which he did," and the "great joy" that was "in that city"⁸.

II. Our Lord's miraculous discernment of the thoughts and feelings of those by whom He was surrounded was frequently displayed in a manner which strongly illustrates our position, that all Christian teaching, whatever form it may assume, whether of persuasion, testimony, or reproof, should be carefully adapted to the spiritual and moral state of those to whom it is addressed. "He needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man"⁹, and in accordance with this insight into the heart, His words and actions were often directed to the most secret thoughts of those who conversed with Him. "There arose a reasoning among" His disciples, "which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by Him¹;" and from that text enforced a lesson of humility and childlike simplicity. When the Pharisee who had bidden Him to eat began to speak within himself in blame of the poor woman who was a sinner, and in disparagement of Him Who suffered her attentions, "Jesus answering," as it is said, *i. e.* speaking in

⁷ Acts iii. 10, 11.

⁸ Ib. viii. 5—8.

⁹ Joh. ii. 25.

¹ Luke ix. 46, 47.

reference to what was passing in His entertainer's mind, "said, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee;" and proceeded to a searching comparison between his habits of mind and conduct and those of the poor penitent whom he despised². In both these cases we behold the self-satisfied offender brought by gentle violence to humbling reflections on himself; if perchance he might be taught to see within that carnal pride and worldliness which were, in the one instance, the cause of unbelief, in the other, of erroneous conceptions of the truth.

An example of more forcible attack upon the conscience of the profane unbeliever is seen in our Lord's answer to those scribes and Pharisees who brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, thereby hoping to involve Him in an opposition to the law of Moses: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last³." But here we

² Luke vii. 37—50.

³ Joh. viii. 3—9. Sim. when the chief priests, scribes, and elders heard the threatening conclusion of the parable of the vineyard, Luke xx. 9—16, they were alarmed, and said, God forbid. If we consider their circumstances and habits of mind, we shall find a difficulty in accounting for their ready understanding and application of this parable, without adopting the suggestion offered in the text, and supposing that its meaning was forced on them by a special act of Divine power.

detect clearly another source of power in the faithful declaration of the truth in Jesus. Those few and simple words could never by their own force have wrought so strongly on these hardened hypocrites. He who uttered them sent forth His Spirit with them, that each sinner might see unveiled the hideous deformity of his own soul. They retired self-convicted, ashamed, and humbled, and consequently by so much the nearer to the kingdom of God.

If we are right in supposing that, in this last instance, He confounded His opponents by a direct exertion of spiritual power, we have examples of a somewhat similar effect from the same cause in the restraint which He occasionally imposed on His infuriated enemies, lest they should anticipate the appointed time for His deliverance to death. On several occasions "they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come⁴." "They were invisibly restrained," believed S. Chrysostom, "and their wrath held in with bit and bridle⁵." At another time, the Jews "took up stones to stone Him;" but He concluded His discourse, and then left them without receiving any injury⁶. "They stood motionless by the power of Christ," observes S. Cyril⁷.

⁴ Joh. vii. 30; sim. viii. 20; x. 39.

⁵ Hom. l. in Joh. § 2. c. vii. 30.

⁶ Joh. x. 31.

⁷ Ad. loc.

Even the rude officials, a class of men to whom the most painful services become indifferent through habit, who seldom refer themselves to aught beyond the command of their superior, when sent to seize Him, were mastered by some unknown influence, and returned to their employers without having fulfilled their instructions, or being able to give a more definite account of their failure than is conveyed in these few memorable words: "Never man spake like this man." The rulers themselves appear to have been overawed on this occasion; for we find that, after a few angry words of disappointment and surprise, the assembly was dissolved, and, acquiescing in their defeat, "every man went unto his own house ⁸."

The expulsion of the money-changers from the courts of the Temple is perhaps the most striking instance upon record of our Lord's power over the minds of His rebellious creatures. S. Jerome, indeed, declares this to be the most wonderful of His miracles: "That a single man, at that time an object of contempt, and so low in condition that He was afterwards crucified, while the scribes and Pharisees were raging against Him, could expel so great a multitude by the blows of one scourge ⁹." The same thought occurred to Origen, who entered more deeply than S. Jerome into the

⁸ Joh. vii. 45—53.

⁹ In Matt. xxi. 12.

occult cause of their submission to so great an indignity; namely, “the Divine power of Jesus, who was able when He chose, to extinguish the inflamed passions of His enemies, and overawe tens of thousands by the grace of God¹.” He did not stay to reason with them on the irreverence of their conduct; He displayed no miraculous proof of His authority to regulate His Father’s house; but, strong in an invisible might, with one short text of Scripture in His mouth, He rebuked and chased away the profane violaters of the sanctuary.

The same subduing influence assisted, and at times protected, His first followers, when it became their duty to confess His Name before a hostile world. Thus we read of those who brought about the death of the first Martyr, that, though unconvinced, “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake².” So the Lord stood with the Apostle of the Gentiles before the throne of Cæsar to strengthen him, and deliver him “out of the mouth of the lion;” for the providence of God is ever on the watch to further the diffusion of His saving Word. S. Paul himself referred his deliverance to this end: “That by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear³.”

¹ In Joh. ii. 13, tom. ii.

² Acts vi. 10.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 17.

III. We now turn to another and distinct feature in our Lord's ministry, which, like the preceding, is clearly referable to certain of the principles that have been laid down. The soul of man has other powers than those to which we have hitherto supposed His teaching to have been addressed. That active, subtle, and far-seeing faculty, which we name imagination, has its own province in religion, no less than has the reasoning mind, or feeling heart, or even the moral instinct. The imagination, therefore, as well as the moral taste, must be subjected to a chastening and elevating discipline, ere it is allowed to range at large the new and varied world of Christian truth. It is undeniable that many traces of this principle are observable in the words and actions of our Blessed Lord, although, from its nature, they are less obvious and less tangible than those marks of forethought and system which have been already pointed out. And here I would direct attention, in the first place, to a peculiarity which is observable in several of His miracles. It will be acknowledged that His mighty works were not all recommended by their obvious necessity or utility. For example, the *instantaneous* cessation of the tempest on the sea of Galilee was not essential to the preservation of the disciples; but no gradual mitigation of its fury, though evidently to be referred to the miraculous power of Christ, could have produced that astonishment and

awe, that depth of earnest thinking and inquiry, which ensued, when "He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm, and the men marvelling said, What manner of man is THIS, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

There are some miracles of our Lord which have been branded by the infidel as merely mischievous in their effect. Now, without assuming that they had no other uses, let us regard them in the point of view which has been here suggested. Let us conceive that in these mighty works our Lord, who also will be our Judge, has thrown out a fearful hint of the dread nature of His wrath when unrestrained by mercy; a hint to be received and pondered in the heart of hearts, till every thought and feeling are coloured by its meaning, and sloth and sensuality are driven out by fear. Thus, when the barren fig-tree⁵ was visited by the "blasting of the breath of His displeasure," He revealed to human eyes a glimpse, sufficient though imperfect, of that "extreme malediction which shall light" on the impenitent; and so proclaimed to the whole world in a perpetual figure, "Except ye bring forth fruit, ye shall all likewise perish." The destruction of the herd of swine⁶, kept in evasion of the law, was equally calculated to excite fearful surmisings of the unseen world of spirits by which we are

⁴ Matt. viii. 26, 27.

⁵ Matt. xxi. 19.

⁶ Ib. viii. 32.

surrounded, and earnest reflections on the searching justice and severity of God. Thus, then, did He lay in the rude soil of unregenerate nature the seeds of that awful apprehension of the Divine Majesty which finds its Christian expression in those words of the Apostle: "our God is a consuming fire".⁷

There are some other miracles of a different kind to these, for which we might be at a loss to find an adequate occasion, if we did not observe that they were singularly calculated to interest and affect the rude and uncultivated mind, which is, generally speaking, more easily captivated and more effectually excited to activity by events that raise simple wonder than by a direct appeal to its reflection. And this effect is not confined to the actual witnesses, but extends to all who, in a simple spirit, hear or read of these astonishing acts of power. Of the kind here referred to are the miracle of Christ's walking on the sea and those two incidents which followed, the sudden subsidence of the storm, and the immediate arrival of the ship in harbour⁸. It would be impossible to conceive a series of wonders better adapted to elevate the imagination of simple fishermen accustomed to the dangers, difficulties, and painful labours of a seafaring life. Those waters, in whose treacherous

⁷ Heb. xii. 29.

⁸ Joh. vi. 19. 21; Matt. xiv. 32.

bosom so many had found a grave, remained undisplaced and firm beneath His feet; the boisterous winds and swelling waves sunk to profound calm at His mere will, and, freed from the wonted labours of a tedious passage, the wondering mariners beheld themselves at once in the haven where they would be! Transporting glimpses of that better world, the home and heritage of angels and of just men made perfect, of which He, who was then with them, bears the key; in which power shall no longer be divorced from will, but man shall be, truly and without conditions, whatever he desires, and thinks, and knows!

There are also certain of His miracles which seem so expressly intended to interest the simple and uncultivated mind, that enemies of the Gospel have been able to assert their resemblance to fairy tales. Of this kind are the conversion of water into wine⁹; the miraculous draught of fishes at the beginning of His ministry¹, and a similar event after the Resurrection²; the capture of the fish with a piece of money in its mouth³; the “fire of coals” upon the shore with “fish laid thereon and bread⁴.” Of course we must not exclude from the intention of these miracles every purpose but the one now named; but it is at least much in favour

⁹ Joh. ii. 1—11.¹ Luke v. 4—7.² Joh. xxi. 6.³ Matt. xvii. 27.⁴ Joh. xxi. 9.

of that being one of their principal objects, that no moral lesson is inferred from any of them. Only one is alluded to as typical ⁵,—namely, the first miraculous draught of fishes; and its use as a type is not inconsistent with the explanation that is here proposed.

It will not be disputed that many events in our Lord's history which are not miraculous both had at the time, and with the devout and humble reader still have, the same tendency as that which has been here ascribed to certain of His miracles. Take, for example, the affecting story of the poor penitent, who, on her knees and weeping, anointed His feet with oil, and wiped them with her hair ⁶; or the similar narrative of her who came with a costly offering to "anoint His body for the burial ⁷." Such also was the picturesque incident which occurred "on the last day, that great day of the feast" of tabernacles, when Jesus stood and cried, in allusion to the ceremony then proceeding, of drawing water from the pool of Siloam, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink ⁸." A similar character may be assigned to His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, on an ass's colt, amid the waving of palm-branches and the loud hosannahs of the people; a wondrous spectacle of greatness and humility, of

⁵ Luke v. 10.

⁷ Matt. xxvi. 6—13.

⁶ Ib. vii. 37, 38.

⁸ Joh. vii. 37.

real and acknowledged power in contrast with a divine contempt for all the human accidents of power⁹.

Similar emotions are excited, and, therefore, we may believe, were intended to be excited, by the poetical accessories and details of several of our Lord's parables. They do not always contribute much to the substance of the lesson which is enforced, but they adorn, and, therefore, recommend that lesson; they have their place in a great system designed to engage and elevate the imaginative faculty, and thus form one other element in those ennobling thoughts and sympathies by which the soul of man ascends to its eternal home.

The same effect would be produced by the expansive and suggestive character of our Saviour's teaching, which is always thrown into a form adapted to elicit, and sometimes, we may say, almost to extort, inquiry and reflection, and yet is at the same time so deep, so full and various, as to be capable of furnishing matter for life-long meditation. Nor must we omit to observe, though to enter further on the subject would be foreign to our purpose, that the religious cultivation of the imaginative faculty would be greatly promoted by the prophetic declarations of our Lord respecting the sufferings of His disciples, the triumphant progress of the Gospel, and the eventual ruin of its

⁹ Joh. xii. 13, 14.

opponents: as the same end had been for many ages promoted among the chosen people by that magnificent array of type and prophecy which heralded the advent of the Redeemer of mankind. Even to our time and to the end of all things it has been provided that the same interest should be excited and the same elevating images presented to the mind by a large portion of the older prophecies and by the more varied visions of the beloved disciple.

IV. In this and in the preceding chapter we have endeavoured to show that the teaching and the actions of our Lord and His Apostles pre-supposed and practically recognised those principles the truth and importance of which it has been the chief object of this Essay to establish. In order to avoid prolixity, we have abstained from referring to those principles at every step, believing that their bearing on the examples adduced would be sufficiently obvious without any particular indication. If, however, the method pursued should have failed to make the relevancy of these chapters to our general subject so manifest as it might otherwise have been made, the defect is readily supplied by a simple statement of the inferences which our brief survey of the sacred narrative appears to justify. We have seen, then, that our Lord and His inspired followers were always more solicitous to build the faith of their disciples upon a moral than upon an intel-

lectual basis ; that they acted upon the implied necessity of previous self-discipline for the habitual sinner ; that in some measure, and according to the means at hand, they oftentimes supplied this want ; that they perpetually took cognisance of the internal obstacles to conviction ; that they appealed to the conscience of their hearers ; that they enlisted on the side of truth the various effects of harmony and beauty, of awfulness and grandeur ; and, lastly, that they spoke and acted in full reliance on the principle, that the ultimate determination of the will to faith depends upon the secret operation of the grace of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

It has been the primary design of the investigation which we have just brought to a conclusion to detect, and in so doing to suggest a remedy for, some of those causes of failure which confessedly attend, and in a great measure frustrate, most modern efforts to promote the reception of the Gospel among unbelievers, or to increase its practical influence with the professed Christian. As we pursued the inquiry with these objects in view, we soon found ourselves engaged upon a question of first principles. There appeared to be strong reason to mistrust those traditional grounds upon which, unconsciously perhaps in the majority of cases, the ordinary system of warfare against indifference and unbelief has obviously been based. It could not be permitted us, however, to set aside principles upon which good men have been content to act, as erroneous and delusive, unless we believed ourselves in a position to prove that their place might be supplied by others at once true and efficacious. Accordingly, our next task was an

attempt to show that the Word of God, as understood by its best interpreter, the general mind of the undivided Church, and illustrated by experience and analogy, directs us to certain properties and mutual relations of human nature and Divine truth, as the only efficient and safe basis of any endeavour to overcome the evil heart of unbelief. Such an attempt having now been made, it would form the most natural conclusion to our inquiry if we proceeded to apply those scriptural principles to the construction of a system of practical rules for the direction of those whose office it is to "labour in the word and doctrine." But, not to dwell upon the difficulty of such a course, it may well be doubted if it would be attended with much advantage. Those minds, which are at once sufficiently deep to receive first principles in morals and religion, and sufficiently earnest to act upon them, are able to construct for themselves in practice a far more perfect code of conduct than could be furnished to them in the theoretical suggestions of another. It is, moreover, obvious that such rules as could be formed on grounds of theory must be quite general, if not vague, in character, and that many cases would arise in practice, which could not find a place in the most searching and extended range of speculation. It may be desirable, however, to collect into one view the chief results of our investigation, and to place them in such

a light that their bearing on the treatment of unbelief in Christian lands, on missionary enterprise, and on the ordinary teaching of the Church, may present itself with the required distinctness to our minds.

I. To begin with that which is the extreme case in respect of natural disadvantage. It has been shown that the most uncultivated heathen is not without a certain preparation for the reception of the Gospel. The truths of natural religion, including the rules of ordinary morality, proceed from God Himself, and consequently, so far as they go, they cannot fail to be in accordance with, and lead up to, the more ample theology of Revelation. They are but shadows and faint outlines, it is true, but they are shadows from the everlasting hills, projections of the mind and nature of the Deity upon the soul of man. The foundations of the faith are set deep in the original soil of natural religion; and the stronger the heathen basis of obedience and reverence, the more stable will be the Christian superstructure that may be reared upon it.

The state of the Jew does not differ essentially from that of the heathen. The difference which exists is one of degree and of external circumstance alone. The religious knowledge of the once chosen people is more extensive and more definite in character; but they neither possess, nor have

forfeited, any special gift of grace, which might form the ground of a material distinction.

On the other hand, the condition of the apostate Christian is essentially distinct from that of the Jew or heathen. Even if we suppose that from imperfect education he possesses a very limited knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel and of the evidences of its authenticity ; yet, as a partaker of the grace of Baptism, he must have had, as reminiscences of early life will oft survive to testify, some personal experience of the esoteric force of Christian truth. In rejecting it, he has resisted the Spirit, who was given to be his guide and teacher. We must add, that whatever his conduct may have been in other respects, he has at least incurred the guilt of disobedience by the outward act of renunciation. If we refer ourselves to Christian principles, it is manifestly impossible to separate apostasy from sin ; nor can there be much doubt of its meriting condemnation on the sole ground of natural morality. The infidel in a Christian land has found himself providentially placed in connexion with a system purporting to be of Divine origin, certainly interwoven with a most perfect moral law, embracing and unfolding all the truths of natural religion, and confessedly operating for the advantage of mankind at large. An institution thus beneficial, and thus accredited, demands the respect and adherence of

every reasonable being, until its falsehood has been shown beyond the possibility of doubt. Yet those of whom we speak have ventured to oppose to it, not the antagonist authority of a professed revelation more brightly radiant with divinity, but their individual fancies and opinions feebly defended by a wretched pretence of historical or verbal criticism, or with still greater rashness though in some instances with more plausibility, by the attractive but vain conjectures of a capricious speculation. It is sufficiently clear that no one can act thus without prejudice to humility and honesty, or without forfeiting the assistance which even heathens have observed to attend upon the struggles of the obedient and sincere.

It should be remarked also that persons who give way to doubt or disbelief on insufficient grounds,—and in religion this includes all grounds whatever,—are contracting a sceptical habit of mind, and thus creating an obstacle to their return, which will increase at every step in their departure from the faith. Moreover, it is a matter of experience that apostasy is generally the result and consummation of long-continued habits of irreverence and sin. The practice of religion and morality has been abandoned before the Gospel has been formally disowned. In some cases, infidelity has even been chosen, almost from calculation, as a supposed refuge from the terrors of remorse. As

Christians ourselves, and forming our judgment upon Christian principles, we cannot but fear that those who act in this manner are in imminent danger of “quenching the Spirit” of grace and truth, and of being finally given over to a “strong delusion that they should believe a lie.” By their abuse of the opportunities so graciously afforded them of acquiring a right knowledge of God and of cultivating a sound faith in Him, they even place themselves in a worse position as regards the hope of their conversion, than those among the heathen who are in an analogous condition with reference to their fewer advantages, who have lived in similar defiance of the restraints of conscience and of the authority of natural and traditional religion. We may also infer safely that, inasmuch as reasoning had in reality little or no place among the causes of their unbelief, the darkness in which they have involved themselves will not be dissipated by mere intellectual evidence, however cogent it may appear to others¹. This is confirmed by what we know of the repentance of several notorious infidels, whose change of mind has taken place at a time when (as in some) the illusive excitement occasioned by vicious excess has been allayed if not subdued, or when (as in others) the proud and self-reliant temper fostered by the flattery of the

¹ See Hooker, Eccl. Pol. B. v. c. ii.

world has been broken down,—by the urgent pressure of calamity, by severe pain of body, or the visible approach of death. So long as nothing occurs to disturb the usual tenor of the thoughts and feelings, it is not difficult to drown the whispers of conscience and the still fainter voice of truth in the wild tumult of passion, or in the din of worldly occupation; but when some sudden stroke of Providence has abated the violence of the one, or given an undesired respite from the distractions of the other, the soul wakes up from its deceitful dream, and every remnant of the good that once dwelt in it begins to heave and struggle beneath the mass of evil habits by which it seemed so hopelessly oppressed. When softened and humbled by such chastisement, the relenting infidel may become able to entertain the arguments for the truth of Revelation; but if so, he is also prepared to believe as readily upon authority alone. Faith and loyalty are reviving through the sanctifying grace of God, and under His guidance are learning to recognise the nature and the claims of truth, for whose sake they were implanted in the heart of man. When, therefore, we are required to minister to one who, having wandered long in unbelief, conceives a desire to turn once more to the repose of faith, it is our part to bring him on his way with “loving correction;” not to palliate the evil of the past, nor, on the other hand, to interpose unnecessary restraints and

checks. Truth must in many things appear perplexing and severe to those who are not altogether "of the truth," nor will they be always able to "hear the voice" of Him who "came into the world that He should bear witness unto the truth²;" but we may be assured that, whatever the preparation of the disciple, it can never be spoken with greater power and efficacy than when it is uttered by the lips of charity.

Above all we must take care that the returning wanderer is not received to doubtful disputation, and a trial of dialectic skill. In almost every stage of the true penitent's return, the use of naked argument is calculated to impede rather than facilitate the formation of a lively faith. From the infirmity of our nature, severe exercise of the mind is incompatible with that which is most necessary in the case supposed,—a watchful and stern discipline of the affections. It not only withdraws the attention from that more important task, but destroys the energy and power of concentration which are essential to a sustained moral effort. The use of such a method is also calculated to prove a fruitful source of future error, or, at the best, distress, by giving the apparent sanction of religion to a false estimate of the office of the intellect. It is likewise a matter of experience that when men are first under a strong sense of the destructive and debasing nature of sin,

² Joh. xviii. 37. Comp. viii. 47 ; x. 26, 27 ; 1 Joh. iv. 6.

they have but little relish for elaborate proofs of the truth of revelation, or disquisitions upon particular doctrines. To obtrude such things on the attention is to divert the healing sorrow of repentance and disappoint the hope of peace just springing in the soul. The sincere penitent is beginning, at least, to be conscious of the cloud which impairs his spiritual sight and renders him an unfit judge of holy things. He is, therefore, more than willing to dispense with the array of syllogisms and to put religion to the test of experience by accepting it as true. After some progress in the Christian life, he learns the mercy and the wisdom of the dispensation which demands faith before it imparts light, and is thankful that he was persuaded to his own happiness by means more forcible than demonstration; that he was caught with a gracious guile and drawn towards his Father by the "bands of love."

There are, however, cases of another kind in which a beneficial result may be expected with more certainty from the use of argument, or, at least, from an intellectual exhibition of the evidences, if carefully freed from all injurious accessories. Such a method may generally be employed with little hesitation when doubts have been instilled into a mind imperfectly informed, but not polluted by a course of wilful sin or perverted by a deliberate rejection of any portion of the truth. It must be confessed that a sensitive and weak faith always

implies some moral hindrance to the free and full reception of the Gospel, and that the wilful indulgence of doubt involves actual sin. "He is in the better state who needs no answer to the objections he may meet with, as they may well be despised by any Christian through the Spirit dwelling in him ³." Yet those who do require an answer ought not to be neglected, or defrauded of our sympathy, on account of a weakness which may be temporary and have nothing wilful in it. A state of uncertainty with regard to the truths of religion is always painful to persons of the character supposed: they earnestly desire a steadier conviction, and we may always hope that, in due time, it will be granted to their prayers, if they do not neglect the condition of obedience which is pre-requisite to the formation of a sound and living faith. It was for such well-disposed but unstable minds that Origen composed his refutation of the blasphemies of Celsus, believing that his labour would be wasted on the profane infidel, and was not needed by the strong man in Christ. To the violence of open enemies he would oppose only the silent eloquence of the Christian life, thus following the example of Him who is the truth when false witness was borne against Him. In the preface addressed to his friend Ambrosius, he thus explains his views; "I venture to affirm that

³ Orig. c. Cels. Pref. p. 4.

this defence of Christianity, which you require of me, tends to prejudice that defence which consists in facts, and to disparage the power of Jesus which is manifest to those who are not wanting in sense⁴." Nevertheless he will undertake the task for the sake of the weak brother, whom, however, he seems hardly to think worthy of the name of brother: "I do not congratulate the believer in Christ who can allow his faith to be disturbed by Celsus, or by any plausibility of argument, I know not in what class to place him who requires written arguments to preserve him unshaken in the faith. However, because in the multitude of those who are esteemed believers may be found some of such a character as to be shaken and subverted by the writings of Celsus, and again healed by the answer to them, I have resolved to comply with your request, and to answer the work which you have sent me⁵."

It will be observed that the author now quoted does not appear to suppose in those to whom he refers, any positive impediment to the attainment of religious knowledge, or of an assured faith, from the wilful indulgence of sinful habits. We must remember, however, that the moral character can never improve, or long continue stationary, when the sanctions of religion are withdrawn or weak-

⁴ Orig. c. Cels. Pref. p. 2.

⁵ Ib. p. 3.

ened; and that, if the passions should emancipate themselves from moral control while the faith is unsettled, difficulties will arise which we cannot hope to overcome by any solution of the doubts professed or any answer to objections. The interest of the individual in the discovery of truth will be diminished in proportion to his guilt; the enlightening Spirit will forsake him; and not until he approaches the study of religious questions as a penitent, can he hope to attain to that clear-sighted and calm certainty which is the blessed privilege of the pure-hearted and obedient.

In every case a holy life is the greatest help to the knowledge of God, and the best safeguard against error; for those who are led "by the Spirit" into the "way of righteousness," will by the same Spirit be guided along that way into "the place of understanding." On the other hand, aversion from the Gospel is at once the result and evidence of an unspiritual, and therefore immoral, state of mind. We must learn to regard the sceptic and the unbeliever as men whose spiritual vision has been impaired by sin. Sin is the root of all infidelity; and not until we begin to acknowledge and to act upon this principle, can we attempt its removal with a good prospect of success. But since a moral disorder demands a moral remedy, it becomes our duty to

endeavour, in full reliance upon God, to awaken the slumbering conscience, to detach the affections from unworthy pursuits, and to elevate the whole character. We must take for our model the preaching of S. Paul to Felix, and discourse of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come⁶." We must labour to realize the type which is displayed for our instruction in the mission of the great teacher of repentance; for "the sacrament of John is even to this day fulfilled in the world: the Spirit and power of John come first unto the souls of all who are about to believe in Christ Jesus, and 'make ready a people prepared for the Lord⁷.'" While this happy change is advancing, a new power of perception is gradually developed; a new standard of credibility is without resistance, perhaps unconsciously, adopted; one truth after another is received into the belief; objections lose their force, and doubts disappear. The work so conducted may be slow in progress, but it will be the more permanent in its result. The imperceptible advance of good is often but one token of its Divine origin and character; for "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation⁸."

⁶ Acts xxiv. 25.

⁷ Orig. in Luc. i. Hom. iv. Ed. Ben. tom. iii. p. 937.

⁸ Luke xvii. 20.

II. A more correct view of the position and real wants of those who are unhappily involved in unbelief or doubt, leads necessarily to a more enlarged and practical idea of the evidences of the Christian faith. The various degrees of moral and intellectual attainment require a treatment as diversified and various. As man is now constituted, that which repels one, may, without more or less reason, attract another. What is but a probability to this man will have the weight of demonstration with his neighbour. Again, that which at one time was without force or meaning, becomes to the same person, as he advances in the wisdom that is from above, significant and cogent. Hence, in part, the diversified character of our Lord's teaching, as we have traced it in some few of its bolder lines; and because the work which He fulfilled on earth has now become the mission of His Church, acting in His Name, in obedience to His will, and guided by His Spirit;—it is no less necessary than befitting that her teaching should be framed upon His perfect model, that it may be said of Him speaking by her, as truly as of the words of His mouth: "Sometimes He rebukes, sometimes He threatens; for some He mourns, to some He speaks in song; . . . our Saviour hath many voices and many methods for the salvation of man. His threats admonish, His rebukes convert; He shows compassion by His mourning, He

encourages by His song⁹." In a word, there are many instruments of conviction or persuasion which are as legitimate as argument, and, to most minds, more powerful and constraining; inducements from without, impulses from within; influences not easily defined, not always to be traced, but strong and searching, which pervade and leaven every thought and feeling. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely," all have their function in the design of God,—all are commissioned to co-operate in the regeneration of man,—to attract, to convince, to subdue, to elevate, that his whole being may be attuned to heavenly truth, and God his Maker glorified in the due exercise of every faculty and affection.

III. A great responsibility is thus thrown upon the discretion of the Christian teacher. He is called upon to constitute himself a judge of character and motives, and to regulate his conduct by the result of his observations. In other words, he becomes an administrator of the Divine law of equity: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath¹." In speaking thus we seem to describe an office of such extreme responsibility, that no

⁹ S. Clem. Al. Adm. ad Gent. p. 7.

¹ Matt. xiii. 12; xxv. 29.

humble man would venture to assume it without the clearest sanction of authority. Yet no one can preach the Gospel with fidelity to his great trust without being obliged, whether consciously or not, to take it upon himself; nor do we find that thoughtful men are slow to observe or to acknowledge the duty which is thus imposed upon them. S. Chrysostom, for example, after explaining by a paraphrase that the saying of our Lord, which has just been quoted, refers to the method observed by God in the dispensation of religious privileges, proceeds to speak in these terms of the part which is taken by the minister of Christ in giving effect to the Divine ordinance: "The same rule we observe ourselves: when we see a man hearing us carelessly, and we fail to fix his attention after many exhortations, we thenceforth hold our peace; for if we persevere, the consequences of his carelessness are aggravated; but when we find one who is anxious to learn, we draw him on, and replenish him with instruction²."

We have seen that our Lord Himself was wont in this manner to regulate His disclosures by the ability of the hearer to receive benefit from them, thus observing, in respect of doctrine, the same principle which He avouched with regard to discipline, when asked why His disciples fasted not³.

² Hom. xlv. in Matt. tom. ii. p. 2.

³ Matt. ix. 14—17.

It might be objected, however, that "He knew what was in man" by a Divine intuition, and that it is very difficult, if it be right, for a mere man to decide upon the secret character of others by inference from their external conduct. It may be urged too, that, since a behaviour may be assumed in order to impose upon the eyes of men, it must be also imprudent to allow oneself to be much influenced by a criterion so uncertain and deceitful. In practice, however, all such difficulties vanish. No one hesitates to divide mankind into separate classes by broad lines of moral distinction. A person of experience, and especially of religious experience, is in general able to form a correct estimate of the sincerity of those who profess an interest in questions of religion or morality. Besides, the class of wilful hypocrites is very small, and the most artful hypocrisy is certain to betray itself at last by a want of keeping and consistency. Our Lord appears to intimate that even those false prophets, whom He describes as wolves in the disguise of sheep, may be detected by the practical result of their teaching, both in themselves, no doubt, and in their disciples. "By their fruits ye shall know them⁴." We may believe, then, that, when opportunities for observation are given, the actions and behaviour will be, upon the whole, to

⁴ Matt. vii. 20.

one who is skilled in the discernment of spirits, a sufficient index to the principles which really govern the soul. If, however, such opportunities should be denied, we are still justified in founding a general caution upon that universal truth, attested both by Holy Scripture and experience, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked⁵." We may always presume that there is evil beneath the surface; even when every thing that meets the eye is favourable, especially in the case of those who are both ignorant of the principles and destitute of the grace of Christianity. According to our measure, therefore, we must in this, as in all other things, be guided by the example of our Lord and His Apostles, and first endeavour to pluck up the root of bitterness, that the good seed falling on the prepared ground of an "honest and good heart" may strike its root deeply, and spring up and yield fruit an hundred-fold.

It is not always, however, that we are in circumstances which enable us to exercise a discretionary power, to select our topics, to speak or be silent, as we think best. More frequently than not we are called upon to deal with men in masses, in which case all but the most obvious and undeniable distinctions must be neglected. In one way or another, and at one time or other, the truth must

⁵ Jer. xvii. 9.

be declared to all, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." And we must remember, that whatever degree of caution we observe, whatever labour we employ, the result will still be beyond our control. If our duty leads us to attempt to give a simultaneous impulse to numbers, we shall ever find that though the called are many, the chosen will be few: if we bestow our labour, our care and prayers, on individuals, our warmest hopes will often be defeated by the instability or insincerity of those by whose apparent progress they were raised. In such trials it is our comfort to know, from the examples of our Lord and His Apostles, that self-condemnation and regret are not the only feelings which it is permitted us to entertain. "It sometimes happens that the human teacher gives utterance to a truth, and that which he says is not understood, but those who hear it are offended, and depart. Then he is sorry that he declared the truth. He says to himself, I was wrong to say so; I was wrong to say this. Behold, it happened to the Lord: He spake, and lost the many; He remained to the few. But He was not disturbed at it; because He knew from the beginning both those who would believe, and those who would not. We, if it happen to us, are much disturbed. Let us find consolation in the Lord; and yet let us speak our words with caution⁶."

⁶ S. Aug. in Joh. Ev. Tr. xxvii. c. 8.

IV. The Christian derives another practical lesson of great importance from the same Divine example when he observes his reliance upon an unseen power to give effect to his instruction and rebuke. Our Lord indeed could send forth His Spirit, and control the wayward heart of man, as readily as He could speak peace to the troubled sea. Such actions were wrought by a power that was essential and original in Him; but they were also a pledge and first performance of that which, in due measure, will be fulfilled in His Church unto the end of time. A similar power, though less mighty in its results, attended the word spoken by His first followers, and gave them confidence in their assault upon the kingdom of Satan; nor need we who have succeeded to their work be afraid to claim for ourselves the assistance of the same Spirit in breaking up the hard and stony ground when we prepare the soil, or to depend upon His gracious influence to quicken the good seed, which is the Word of God, when we have gone forth to sow. It is also our duty, no less than our privilege, to rely upon His aid, to pray for it, and to ascribe all success to His effectual working. "It is the master within who teaches; Christ teaches; His inspiration teaches. Where His inspiration and His anointing are not, the words make but an empty sound without ⁷."

We know too that, when it was conducive to the

⁷ S. Aug. in Joh. Ep. I. Tr. iii.

interest of truth that its maintainers should be saved from present danger, or even gain an open triumph, the power of God was never wanting to abash and confound those who hardened themselves against His Spirit and His Word. The little scourge and single arm by which the money-changers were expelled, the resistless wisdom of S. Stephen, the mighty weapons and manifold deliverances of S. Paul,—all speak the intervention of a superhuman power by whose sustaining and protecting aid the servants of God, whether in a figure or to the letter, have in all ages “stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness have been made strong, have waxed valiant in fight, have turned to flight the armies of the aliens⁸.” It appears to us while we peruse the inspired record of triumph or deliverance, as if the gainsayers were often under the control of an unseen influence, acting on them as on beings without will and reason, and so diverting their fury from its intended object. They were treated by the Divine Power, in whose presence they stood, (be it in His own flesh or in His servants,) somewhat as we are wont to treat unruly children or the insane, whom we coerce by an external force when the simple expression of our will is no longer of avail. But He who, in Himself or others, performed such miracles of power, has guaranteed the perpetuity of His protection and assistance to all

⁸ Heb. xi. 33, 34.

who go forth in His Name on the same holy mission. We need not hope the less for the success and final triumph of the truth, because its progress has excited the malignant passions of the ungodly, and the offence of the Cross is great. He whose message we are charged to bear does not send us forth without sword or shield to endure the malice of those who will recoil with fear and hatred from the light we bring, because their principles or deeds are evil. "Lo! I am with you always⁹," is His promise. "In My power shall ye preach. By My might shall sons of Abraham be raised up from the stones, among the gainsayers, among those who rage furiously against you. I will make an entrance for what I have taught: I will perform what I have promised¹."

However, we must remember that the success and safety of the servants of God are but minor considerations, when we contemplate the great series of events by which the final victory over evil is urged on to its accomplishment. The triumph of the Gospel is the chief end with God; but we, His short-sighted instruments, would overstep the bounds of ministerial humility, if we habitually regarded it as the chief end with ourselves. Our duties concern the means we use, the principles upon which we act, the object at which we aim, and not the success or failure that attends our efforts. We must learn to promote or defend the cause of

⁹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

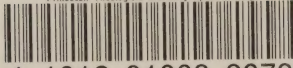
¹ De Voc. Gent. i. ii. c. 2.

truth according to the will of Him whose word it is; as if we believed and valued it ourselves, and knew no other duties in relation to it than those of obedience and loyalty. If we have acted in this spirit, whether we appear to have promoted its success, or see it rejected and despised in spite of toil and suffering on its behalf, our own work is completed, and our own peace assured. Such were the sentiments of the Christian advocate in those days when the daily accession of many converts, and the consistent and firm faith of the believer, furnished a temptation, much greater than can befall us, to look upon the visible result as the true test of all that had preceded and led to it. His temper was unambitious; for he seems to have felt, more intensely and habitually than we are trained or taught to feel, that the conversion of a sinner must be “the work of God,” and that the simple “object before him, while striving by his words and writings to win men to the faith,” was, consequently, (as one speaking of himself hath said,) “to do all with a view to obtain the name of a ‘workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth².’”

² Orig. c. Cels. l. v. p. 231.

THE END.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01008 9078

